Contrasting perspectives within South Asian communities on school and the wider society

Chanda-Gool, Sofia

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CONTRASTING PERSPECTIVES WITHIN SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITIES ON SCHOOL AND THE WIDER SOCIETY

Submitted by

SOFIA CHANDA-GOOL

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Sofia Chanda 12th November 2003

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ABSTRACT

This thesis offers an alternative view of the home/school divide by focusing on what this means for a small group of South Asian communities, taking their viewpoints as central to understanding the divide. The data suggests that the socio- historical, geographical, religious and personal dimensions in the lives of these communities influence their responses to living in the UK. This in turn predisposes certain community members to negotiate and interact more readily with people outside their communities including the school. The thesis also considers the ways in which teachers may be constrained should they wish to liaise with these communities.

Drawing upon an ethnographic approach to methodology the thesis identifies the diversity and complexity of the "lived" experiences of its participants. Compiling transcripts and summarizing interviews and accounts from various sources the data revealed limitations to existing theoretical approaches and therefore a need to develop new categories and frameworks to account for differences in response to the home/school situation. The thesis develops a range of intersecting categories to represent the diversity of perceptions and responses within these communities and considers the contact with school within the broader spectrum of contact with the wider society. In order to make sense of the structural and personal dimensions in the participants' lives the thesis draws upon the concepts of "difference" and "disjuncture" and considers both group identities, and different voices/viewpoints from different actors which over-arch particular group attitudes or roles within groups. This approach acknowledges the influence of the researcher's own bias and argues for self-evaluation and cultural awareness for cross-cultural communication to develop.

This thesis confronts the stereotypical image of ethnic minority groups as well as the general belief circulated in educational material that there is a homogenous community outside the school.

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However, the thesis as a whole seemed to demand endless analysis and synthesis, drawing together a complex range of perspectives. This feat would not have been possible without Dr Carol Morgan's dedication, skill and creativity in helping me to craft it into a coherent body of knowledge. Carol's patience and perseverance were invaluable throughout the process. Furthermore Dr Rajani Naidoo offered me the crucial critical analysis to help structure the material as well as the moral support to complete the final draft.

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CONTENTS:

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0.This study has a complicated genesis. Previous research (Gool and Patton, 1999) with the indigenous people of Australia alerted the researcher to the profound effect that racial discrimination and negative stereotyping has on this population's chances in the educational system. It was clear that the school curriculum and general outlook towards the indigenous Australians not only prejudiced their chances of success but also threatened their cultures. It seemed from the league tables and general assessment of educational attainment in the UK that there was a similar problem with underachievement in some South Asian* communities. Academic underachievement of Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils is noted by Karran (1997); Bhatti (1999); Ghouri (1999); Gillborn and Mirza (2000) and Ofsted (2001).

With these concerns related to achievement the researcher initially pursued a research to elicit South Asian parents and teachers perspectives' about education and schooling; to discover their independent constructs of success within educational terms. This research was of a small, complex group of South Asian communities in an inner city location in the South West of the UK.

There was plenty of evidence in the literature to suggest that research in this area was necessary. This included higher rates of exclusion among black pupils, limited understanding of how different cultural groups experience school, teachers' negative expectations of black pupils and a general prejudice towards ethnic minority families and communities within the

**The term "South Asian" rather than Asian is clarified by Mirza, 1998: "Those who define their heritage and/or ethnic origins as from the South Asian subcontinent, which incorporates Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, and includes East African Asians. This does not mean that the differences between and within each group based on, for instance, class, caste and religion, are not recognised. The term is merely used for convenience (p.93)." In this study the participants come from the latter three areas, the Indians coming from the Punjab.*

wider society. Ghouri (1998); Gillborn (1990); Grant and Brookes (1998) and Sollis (1996) have all provided evidence that African-Caribbean and Bangladeshi students suffer at the other end of teachers' negative expectations of their chances of success. This problem is intensified by the higher rates of exclusion for ethnic minority pupils: "Black children are six times more likely than their white counterparts to be excluded from school according to a London schools report from OFSTED"(Barwuah, 1998: 13). Approaching the problem from the cultural perspective comparing different cultural attitudes seemed a useful perspective.

However, this approach raised two fundamental problems. First, in attempting to access South Asian parents through school channels and databases the researcher was faced with an impasse. She soon became aware that there are various factors that make it difficult and at times impossible to liaise with the parents through schools she had chosen (pilot and main). The schools appeared to have no real links with the communities. Second, the concept of "success" although frequently mentioned in educational material did not translate for members of South Asian communities. There were conceptual differences based upon a different set of beliefs and values. It became clear that it would be useful to research the problem at a more fundamental level: namely analysing the problem of communication with parents that the researcher had encountered herself. This was also endorsed by her experience as a school governor and by other views in the literature.

Three different approaches were uncovered in the literature:

1.1. First there is literature that focuses upon the position of South Asian communities and notes the lack of engagement between these communities and school, for example Bhatti (1999). Also Parker-Jenkins (1995) identifies the incompatibility between values taught in

home and school, Sushma Rani Puri (1997) notes the communication problems and Karran (1997) registers the sense of isolation that some communities experience. Second, there is literature that focuses upon the home/school relationship in general and also examines the South Asian communities in particular, for instance Vincent (2001). Third there is literature that identifies institutional racism, for instance Crooks (1997) and, Gillborn and Youdell (2000). Also Grant and Brooks (1998) recommend that parental involvement is central to the development of more positive relationships between teachers and their Black pupils. However these general comments on the socio-political landscape do not address the diverse and complex issues that originate in some of the cultural differences between schools and communities.

Some of the studies of the home/school divide have successfully helped us to understand many aspects of the situation that exists in areas where South Asian communities live. Furthermore some important ethnographic studies such as Bhatti's (1999) study of a South Asian community do offer considerable insights into a community's perspectives and its priorities, but these insights in the main also focused on issues identified as important by schools, in other words on school agendas. Gregory's (1994, 1998) studies of Muslim children do also offer important insights into the different values and beliefs of Muslim communities but these are ultimately a study of literacy practices. Studies by educational psychologists such as Dunn (1988 1989, 1993) or educationalists such as Rogoff (1990) concern themselves with the values of the home and affective behaviour but these are still fundamentally concerned with "cognitive" development and the contrast between home and school in terms of how these cognitive processes develop. In a sense all these studies, despite using observational strategies, impose school agendas upon their participants' worlds. In these studies both home and school views are incorporated for example Crozier (1999)

critiques the expectation of a "partnership" between school and working class communities applying an equal balance to the study of both school and communities. Kearney (1996) and Wolfendale (1992) also suggest that it is important to consider the contexts in which communities exist. However an important point, which is not developed in these studies, is that there are qualitative differences between homes and schools that are not easily compared. Thus " balancing" home and school viewpoints as if they constitute comparable qualities may be challenged in terms of the validity of this exercise.

The potential for interaction and exchange between the communities and the school and between the members within these communities also requires insight into the particular perspectives of communities. Other school agenda studies include: tackling under-achievement or academic attainment, (Gillborn, 1997; Wynne et al, 1994), the skills and behaviours of children that concern schools (Olemdo, 1997) or alternatively parental involvement with the school (Bastiani, 1997; Hughes, Wikeley and Nash, 1994; Reay, 1996). Even Bourdieu (1986, 1977, 1992, 1997) who has usefully exposed the unequal position of homes within the home/school relationship and who develops the concept of "cultural capital" identifying the existence of "symbolic violence," still takes the school as a starting point. Vincent (2001) offers an enhanced perspective of the home/school relationship by problematizing the discourse of communication and recognising diversity within groups. She identifies how the tension and conflict in the home/school relationship is edited out of educational texts.

There is thus still a predominantly school bias to the literature taking themes from the school agenda, as was exemplified the initial focus on the notion of success that this study started with. It seemed important to adopt a more community-based approach in order to provide a

different dimension. It became imperative to gather a deeper insight into the potential of the communities themselves, to understand their position and perspectives. This rationale lay behind the decision to focus upon the South Asian communities predominantly and not the school. It was important to consider the different contributions of the least considered "interlocutors" in the communicative possibilities between the communities and school.

Initial research amongst the local communities revealed a range of concerns, which differed from those school- based themes in the literature. In order to investigate the values of the local communities there was also considerable diversity within communities to consider. (The local communities comprised Muslims and Sikhs, Bangladeshis/Pakistanis and Indian groups. So the research was limited to these).

1.2. The researcher decided to focus primarily on the views of the community and the new research questions became:

- What are the ways in which the meaning of education can be interpreted? Is there any unanimity of understanding about the meaning of education taking into consideration different cultural perspectives?
- What are the priorities for South Asian communities and how does "school" fit into their agendas?
- What are the difficulties and problems that underlie the lack of communication between the school and South Asian communities?
- In what ways could the educational establishments and policy makers benefit from a greater knowledge of the experience and expertise of parents?

The eclectic but disparate array of historical, political, educational and social anthropological literature, which was first investigated in exploring the field of South Asian communities' relationships with schools, could not answer a series of questions that arose in attempting to answer the research question. There was literature discussing racism, ideology, multiculturalism, antiracism and nationalism on the one hand and studies of cultural practices, beliefs and values on the other and these sat side by side. Yet they seemed somehow detached from each other and unable to offer an explanation for why there appeared to be an impermeable barrier between the values of the school, and the values that characterised the life in South Asian communities.

Some research offered fragmented and descriptive appraisals of aspects of the lives of South Asian communities. Some took a romantic, descriptive approach, (see Ballard's 1994 social anthropological studies that focus on the positive elements in South Asian communities). In this vein, Bhatti's (1999) very useful study of a South Asian community offered a sensitive and thoughtful analysis of the differences, features and perceptions gathered from a South Asian working-class population. However although she does recognize issues of disadvantage that face the community, her work is generally descriptive and does not develop analytical frameworks. Bhatti's analysis does not address the fundamental problem of stereotyping that underlies perceptions of South Asian communities that readers may well carry with them into her study: she does not challenge the disposition of her readers and thereby may inadvertently reinforce their prejudices. Others do focus on a more analytical approach and expose the socioeconomic factors that dominate and inhibit these communities e.g. Modood (1994 and 1997) or Gillborn (1997). Gillborn takes a "deficit" model of South Asian communities by emphasizing the socioeconomic challenges that these communities face, thereby challenging the negative stereotyping that exists in the wider society and

Modood also registers the diversity among South Asian communities. Despite these important contributions that do focus on the South Asian community there is still the problem of understanding the communities in terms of their own strengths and disadvantages.

It was important to adopt a different approach to the home/school divide than that which is normally encountered i.e. by focusing primarily on the communities. An ethnographic approach was deemed most suitable to research this because it allowed the researcher to discover and explore issues that the participants themselves raised. Participants and context played a vital role in terms of the direction, selection and perception of key issues that arose through the data collection process. The design needed to adjust to the pertinent issues that were revealed so that the field was understood in more depth. It was necessary to be flexible in terms of content and approach to capture the "lived" experience of the participants and position their perspectives within a sympathetic context that was sensitive to the cultural differences of those communities.

1.3. Once immersed in the fieldwork a complex picture of priorities immerged. The ethnographic approach adopted revealed the qualitative richness and diversity in the field, something the researcher had not fully realised until she started. She drew upon a range of approaches and arenas to collect her data. Taking a participant observer approach she talked to South Asian social workers to gather their more detached insights, immersed herself in the different communities' festivals and routine meetings and daily schedules, observing and interviewing members of the communities to elicit participants that could represent the diversity she encountered. It was essential to give her full attention to this intricate, interlocking range of beliefs and practices to do justice to the field she discovered. She also drew upon a range of types of data: interviews that were recorded and transcribed and others

that were written up immediately after an exchange; diaries kept by the researcher, and descriptions of environments, localities and occasions. Two teachers of South Asian origin in the local schools were able to offer her an insider's view of their relationship with the communities and their contributions offered some school perspectives in contrast to those of the communities.

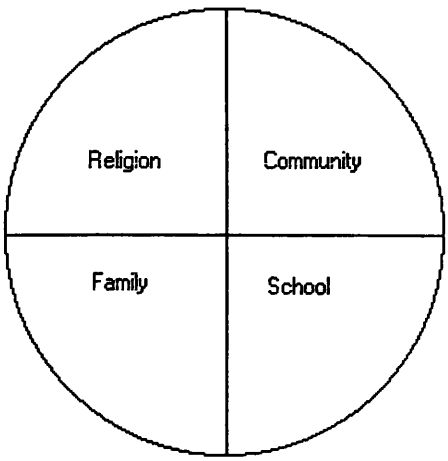
The participants' contributions also helped the researcher to recognise the inadequacy of her own initial cultural assumptions as well as the way in which ready-made categories for South Asians reinforced stereotypes. An increasing awareness of diversity both within and among the communities' members and social workers provided the rationale and foundations for creating new categories that challenged existing assumptions. Within the UK locality the parents and South Asian practitioners voiced contrasting insights. Fieldwork revealed several communities or rather groups of families that to different degrees share certain practices and beliefs that both intermingle and clash.

The awareness of diversity and breadth led to three approaches in the final research:

- A wide range of concerns was considered where school was viewed as one priority but not as an overriding concern as illustrated in FIG 1.1. over page.

FIG 1.1.

The South Asian social worker's diagram



- Groups were divided and categorised according to their own self-identity names. These communities are particularly concerned about establishing their differences and named their own representative centres as "Sikh", "Bangladeshi" or "Pakistani". To an outsider this mix of titles may seem inconsistent as it mixes both cultural and religious identity. However, with reference to Mirza's (1998) explanation of the term South Asian and in the spirit of Habermas's proactive ethnographic stance (Kincheloe and McLaren: 1994) this study defers to the identities that the participants themselves chose to use. Those of Punjabi origin in this study refer to their religious rather than geographical identity and identify themselves as Sikhs. There is then a cross-categorization, intermingling culture and country with religion. Nonetheless, it is important to note that though both the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities also clearly identify themselves as Muslim, the legacy of the partition has resulted in geographical boundaries predominating in the selection of their chosen identity among these South Asian communities.

- Two further layers of categorisation were included which identified a range of attitudes: Firstly the researcher identified different types of voices within the three communities who represented different kinds of relationships to the communities (a 'spokesperson'; a 'member' of each community who was articulate and a 'radical' who showed some independence from her/his community). Secondly the researcher identified a range of responses to society at large (modes), which reflected a self-affirming, contradictory or dynamic response. These attitudes/responses form the main categories in the data analysis and are particular in that they are not tied to any one individual. In other words individuals are shown to demonstrate a variety of responses according to the particular topic they are responding to. Thus a central focus within this thesis is upon the complexity of South Asian identities that relate to a variety of experiences and perceptions, which can produce a range of responses.

One further dimension that was added to the research was a visit to the Subcontinent. The researcher was encouraged, by a sizeable number of the participants, to visit the Subcontinent. In fact this journey provided a crucial dimension; it offered an in-depth experience of living with families and also the opportunity to interview academics and teachers on the Subcontinent. Researching into the roots of both Sikhism and Islam became an essential component in a patchwork of religious, cultural practices and ideologies that the South Asians living in the UK are often either aware or knowledgeable of in terms of their identity. Sikhism and Islam, like all religions, aim to provide powerful and thoughtful meanings for existence. Both offer egalitarian ideologies and their essential scriptures are often a source of inspiration to members of the South Asian communities living in the UK, despite the diverse and sometimes simplistic interpretations some members extract from them. The interviews and descriptions from this visit have been placed in the appendices as

they were dependent upon the contacts established in the UK and could not be analysed with the same methods as those in the UK.

Thus a broad approach was adopted: using a wider perspective of cultural concerns to understand views of school; adopting an ethnographic approach which allowed for priorities to emerge from the communities; and using a multi-layered approach in terms of capturing ideas (with different ethnic groups, different representatives of those groups and a range of responses overarching ethnic groups and representatives). This broad approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of this small set of South Asian communities which in turn sheds light on ways of understanding conceptual distinctions between the notions of "difference" and " disjuncture", both concepts used to characterise discontinuities between South Asian communities and school.

1.4. Summary of chapters

The thesis that follows is arranged in the following way. The review of the literature has been divided into two separate chapters to explore both South Asian identities then literature on school.

Chapter two, the first literature review, describes the development of diverse South Asian identities in response to a global, western context as well as in terms of their own particular social, geographical and historical roots. It also discusses the ways in which the concept of identity helps to locate the emotional and reflective as well as social experiences that South Asians in the UK experience. It offers an overview of South Asian identities: those of religion, family/community, female identity, diversity. A range of responses is thus understood in the light of the tensions created by political and social factors. This chapter

synthesises the political, social and cultural aspects of South Asian identities that are pertinent to the fieldwork.

Chapter three, the second literature review, offers an overview of the educational arena influenced by the National Curriculum that affects South Asian teachers, pupils and parents. The chapter then moves on to consider the potential link between primary and secondary socialisation with reference to various cross-cultural studies. This is followed by a selection of studies and theories that consider the experience of pupils and parents and their relationship with school. It questions the viability of South Asian parent/school relationships under the present educational policy and the tensions that underlie the unequal relationship between home and school. It also looks specifically at Islamic education as well as the misinterpretations that teachers and schools may have of South Asian parents. It concludes with considerations of the pupils' perspective.

Chapter four, on methodology, is divided into two parts. It considers the methodological stance taken in this thesis and clarifies what contributions are made through an ethnographic approach. This entails detailed analysis of the position and influence of the researcher as well as issues of validity and ethics. It then explains methods and procedures as well as the data collection of the fieldwork in the UK. This chapter also explains the way in which the methodology used developed in relation to the issues that arose out of the data collection, for instance how the typologies and categories developed and how various participants are represented within them.

Chapter five, the data analysis, describes the process of developing the inter-linked categories: how three different modes of response to the home/ school situation were

developed and within each mode various groups and types of participants. This chapter includes data gathered within the communities and within the school i.e. the interviews with teachers, community participants and pupils.

Chapter six, draws together the categories and concepts that arose out of the data and analyses them in relation to the literature provided in chapters two and three.
In particular the notions of difference and disjuncture are analysed to identify a further conceptual level of data analysis.

Chapter seven, the conclusion, clarifies how the research question was answered and the contributions this thesis makes and finally identifies recommendations and suggestions for further research. Limitations to the thesis are also considered.

CHAPTER TWO

VIEWS OF SOUTH ASIAN IDENTITY

2.0. This chapter draws upon the concept of identity to analyse and explore the way in which literature has portrayed South Asian identities. Central to understanding South Asian communities is the question of identity. The concept of identity combines both the subjective and objective manifestation of existence. It can be seen as identity imposed by external influences i.e. how the wider society conceives of a person's identity, or as including the personal source of identity: the more creative, reactive and assertive ways in which human beings respond to the outside world. An important facet, central to this chapter, is the dynamic properties of identity, as well as its descriptive or particular features. In the context of South Asian communities there is a complex range of possibilities that emanate from their diverse geographies, histories, cultures, personal experiences and socio-political influences. The chapter evaluates relevant literature in terms of its capacity to reflect the dynamic and mutable elements within South Asian identities that produce responses to living in the UK. It may be that working with this dynamic element could provide a solution to some of the problems associated with the home/school divide.

The chapter includes two groups of literature: the theoretical and ethnographic. It highlights literature from both groups that registers cultural diversity; that identifies inequalities; that focuses on the dynamic, interactive elements in identities in relation to contexts and that offers an explanation for the difficulties that can be present in cross-cultural encounters. Drawing upon an eclectic range of literature in this chapter we cover both general definitions of identity and specific issues related to South Asian identities.

This chapter is divided into three main sections:

After an initial introduction relating to the definition of identity the first section considers the impact of colonialism and globalisation, nationalism and British ethnocentrism upon the development of non-western and more specifically South Asian identities and the resulting meaning and representation of these identities.

The second section analyses and contextualises literature specifically describing South Asian identities, in particular communal identity, religious identity, historical identity and diversity.

The third section considers literature that registers responses to both the conceptual and contextual factors discussed. This final level of analysis reveals the tensions and problems that exist for South Asian community members at both an intra and inter-group level. It also suggests that there are differences in the ways in which members of South Asian communities construe and experience their lives in the UK.

2.1. Defining and contextualizing identity

Identity is a multifaceted and ubiquitous term. It can mean something personal or public and can be grounded in social attributes or personal considerations. Unlike personality it is seen as something that people themselves have power to influence: they can decide upon or construct elements of their identity; this gives it a dynamic and flexible potential. However this self-determination and flexibility may be curtailed by circumstance. Before we can consider the effect of circumstance upon identity, the range of facets within the concept of identity needs to be clarified.

2.1.1.Plural identities and possible tensions

At an intra-personal level self-identity is complex and there is some debate about whether it constitutes pluralities or an essential core identity. It is likely that one person will have several identities in terms of their responsibilities/ activities. They may also have a "hyphenated" ethnic identity (Black –British for example, see Hamers and Blanc 1989). Self-identities are comprised of numerous facets for instance: gender, religion, ethnicity and ideology. June Jordan, as a Black woman notes that the Black women's experience would include a sense of the collective as well as the individual in terms of understanding their identity. Jordan also notes the inescapability of ethnic identity: " For us, there is nothing optional about 'black experience' and/or black studies: we must know ourselves" (1997:560). Recognising a plurality of identities at an intrapersonal level may not however register the tensions and discontinuities that may be felt and experienced around these competing identities. This is complicated by various factors, for example identities can vary according to context. Billig (1987) registers the different ways in which people assert themselves and respond to particular contexts. He identifies how some people choose to be different as part of their identity within a certain context. For instance he describes how some people act "ethnically" by identifying with each other and showing the appropriate aspects of themselves including gestures as well as opinions and how this in turn enforces an ethnic identity.

Identity also develops from social interaction and can be imposed. There is an interaction between the social and intra-personal identity, and tensions can arise when a personal identity struggles to find compatibility in social contexts, and aims to develop independently of an "imposed" identity. Although there is an intra-personal identity, contexts may challenge and undermine or affirm and help to assert this core identity. Patel (1997) in her study of

Bengalis and refugees living in the UK for example analyses the relationship between the social outer identity and inner identity and relates this to the development of self-esteem. Dickinson (1997) also notes that both multicultural and anti-racist models have failed to respond to the needs of young Asian women and that there is a need to acknowledge the female perspective within the specific context that Asian women experience. This in turn may lead to conflict between the personal and social affecting self-esteem.

Phinney (1989) discovered that American Asian adolescents have negative attitudes to their own group and Ghuman (1999) in his study of Asian adolescents found that there is a significant correlation between how ethnic identity is perceived and how self-esteem develops. Rassool (1999) in her study of the identities of immigrant pupils argues that immigrant populations' concepts of their "self" and subjectivities and their social/cultural identities are shaped in relation to their communities and wider society: "Cultural hybridity is forged within the struggle of those often living at the outer-edge of society, for social belonging and self-determination. 'Self-definition' places an emphasis on the process through which genderized and racialized subjects engage in an ongoing process of critique, evaluation, negotiation, self affirmation and validation of themselves in relation to their particular experiences in everyday life." (p.28). Rampton (1995) also registers the issue of social legitimacy that participants need to negotiate. He argues that: " Interaction needs to be situated in the larger structures that both constrain and are reproduced through specific activities, values, norms, roles, purposes and systems of stratification...no domain can be studied in isolation: daily life moves across a number, transporting expectations and practices rooted in one domain across to another..."(p.348). Cultural identities are dynamic and diverse situated in and interacting with a variety of contexts. There are then overlaps across different

facets of identity and authors view identity in different ways and in relation to different circumstances.

2.1.2. Culture and identity

There are however, not just personal and social dimensions to identity but also a broader dimension where the social links with the culture people belong to. Culture helps to form identity. Ghuman (1999) notes how the zeitgeist and reception from the wider society can affect the response of the immigrant: " The decision to integrate does not entirely rest on the immigrants and their descendents but also- perhaps more so- on the reaction of the host culture."(p.25) and Said (1993) in his study of imperialism points to the excluding nature of large cultural groups so that: "Culture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with nation or state; this differentiates 'us' from 'them', ...Culture in this sense is a source of identity...Culture in this way can become a protective enclosure"(Said, 1993: xii-xv). Thus culture can be seen to be way of dismissing or deriding certain identities.

However as with individual identity culture also has a dynamic quality: it is mutable and transformable. Definitions of culture and identity require reference to a dynamic set of ideas and propositions. There is the possibility of imprisoning life forms within the constraints of concepts and words that could reify any knowledge or insight and render it devoid of experiential meaning. Rampton (1995) studying the dynamics of adolescents crossing cultural and linguistic boundaries suggests that, "[if] discourses overlook culture's processual, interactive character [they will] instead conceive of 'cultures' as a set of reified ethnic units "(p.313) and Street (1991) argues that "culture" is a verb, in other words a dynamic process. Furthermore in identifying the culture of a group, race or individual and its relationship to context and history change will be endemic.

Hall (1990) in writing about African-American identities describes the way in which displaced cultural groups and cultural minorities can have a fragmented self-identity, disorientated by their historical experience. Although his focus is on the experience of African-Americans the categories he develops can be used as a springboard for understanding the contradictory elements of other minorities living in the UK. He coins the term "diaspora identity": " Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall,1990: 235). He highlights the mobile process of developing cultural identities: "[Cultural identities] come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything else, which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being externally fixed in some essentialist past, they are subject to continuous 'play' of history, culture and power...cultural identity is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past." (p. 394). If culture is then "on the move", then this suggests that the same will be true of identities. Duijzings (2000) with reference to the issues of identity that confront various ethnic groups in the Balkans writes: "ethnic and religious identities are not as fixed as our experience in Western Europe suggests. One can have a lot more than one 'exclusive identity'."(p.13). The religious and cultural groups in the Balkans exist in an area of constant political upheaval where it is essential to have a flexible and adaptable range of identities. This contrasts with the circumstances for immigrants living in the UK. Duijzing's argument is that it is not just the circumstances but perceptions of identity that constrains the range, which is acceptable.

Castells (1997) as a Spanish academic and sociologist, who is now based in the U.S., sees the development of identity as part of social interaction, a dialectical process inherent in real and not "virtual" relationships. He emphasises the importance of identity in terms of a search for

meaning in life, the need to deal with its more painful and demanding elements. Castells takes a rather different more static view of culture, contrasting the broader area of race or culture with the narrower area of ethnicity: " While race matters, probably more than ever as a source of oppression and discrimination, ethnicity is being specified as a source of meaning and identity, to be melted not with other ethnicities, but under broader principles of cultural self definition such as religion, nation or gender"(p.53). Kakar (1996) an Indian psychoanalyst writes: "Cultural identity, like its individual counterpart, is an unconscious human requirement which becomes consciously salient only when there is a perceived threat to its integrity." (p. 150). Whether it relates to a religious, cultural or personal focus Kakar (1996), and Castells (1997) both argue that there is something profoundly essential about identity that overrides any particular context: that it is inherent to survival. Identities encompass different histories and political dimensions. As was noted in looking at personal identities this broader cultural identity may become more evident when challenged.

There is an interesting tension then between these views, as to whether it is the self or the social context that influences the development of identity.

2.1.3. Globalisation and colonisation

The main focus of this section is upon writers that look at the influence of the state upon identity. These writers identify contrasts between global and local identities; traditional and modern, abstract identities, as represented by a hyperreality through technology and real identities. In particular the critiques provide an insight into the reservations that other cultural groups, may have about the UK culture and identity.

Theorists and social scientists, like Castells, have focused on the aspect of globalisation and how it impacts upon identity. Postmodern theories and critiques of globalisation offer some explanation for the existence of alienation, fragmentation, and inequality that can threaten an individual's or group's sense of identity. Castells (1997) suggests that a "network" society such as that in the western world creates a sense of anonymity, which although it influences reactions, does not create the opportunity for in-depth interaction. In this way the network society can be seen as negating elements of identity, identification and meaning that are essential to some communities. This can contrast with communities in general who incorporate an unchanging set of moral beliefs and values reflected in certain traditions. Giddens (1994) in his study of post-traditional society suggests traditional pre-modern identities were more tied to concrete geographical and historical realities i.e. certain places and times. The global/post-modern identity can be seen as an abstract detached entity , not catering for the fact that people still appear to want to affiliate with places or people in terms of what they represent and value. The development of "localisation" and fan clubs following famous people denotes this movement.

Giddens (1994) adds a further dimension, how globalisation has alienated "traditional communities" namely on a conceptual level. He sees globalisation as incorporating the local, personal and intimate elements of life with concepts of time and space that appear to be indefinite. He differentiates between the traditions of the past in terms of "formulaic truths" and those of the present in which all experts are questioned and all aspects of life scrutinised for their rational validity. He suggests that the formulaic truths of the past legitimised traditional power and gave certain members of society the ability to control time. In his view then the present deconstruction of past traditions can create a sense of ontological insecurity, in which formulaic truth is antithetical to the process of "rational enquiry", where there is no

choice but to choose. He goes on to suggest the importance of a link between tradition and identity where the former provides that "basic trust" that is central to the continuity of identity. He sees rituals as functional in terms of providing a sense of emotional autonomy for the reflexive projection of the self: "[tradition is the] medium of identity where personal or collective identity presumes meaning; but also presumes the constant process of recapitulation and reinterpretation...identity is the creation of constancy over time ...[to] bring the past into conjunction with an anticipated future...[the] prime prerequisite of ontological security"(p.80). He considers that Hobsbawm's (1983) concept of the "invention of tradition" represents a tautology because traditions are by their very nature inventions. However, he suggests that this concept shows up the notion/idea of dislocation from the traditions of the past. This perception of "the past" enforces a sense that the past is "a relic", not part of our present realities, as such traditions are called upon to justify themselves. The need to integrate the past with the present demands a process of discursive justification. Giddens describes how globalisation calls for a rational justification of the traditions often just accepted in some communities.

A further dimension of alienation can occur through the world of virtual reality created by technologies. Such western developments challenge experiences and realities for people and may well enforce a sense of fear. Baudrillard (1988) identifies a "hyperreality" in which contemporary structures of communication (i.e. the media) create a simulated reality that threatens to replace reality. This paradoxically creates barriers to communication, and also circulates a sense of cultural or social homogeneity. The situation ca be particularly challenging for South Asian communities where there are already barriers to communication (language/culture) and this then adds one more layer of difficulty. Furthermore, this

hyperreality perpetuates images that preclude marginal groups through its hegemonic controls.

Beck (1991) identifies current western society as a "risk" society where there has been a shift in awareness, uncertainty, dependence and trust that has arisen from both technological and conceptual developments. This concept of "risk" relies on a sense of autonomy and independence to deal strategically with any challenge it presents. A particular cultural mindset is thus foregrounded which may be alien to traditional societies.

Another aspect of the context of identity for South Asians is the history of colonialism and current western views of modernity. Said (1993) suggests that third world and minority cultures, also have to counter a more entrenched form of global hegemony presented through colonialism and western modernity. Globalisation can also be construed as a form of colonialism as suggested by Chatterjee (1997). Chatterjee, in his book: *The Present History of West Bengal,* draws attention to the debilitating impact of colonialism on Indian self-identity and progress. In a chapter called: "our modernity" Chatterjee suggests that it is necessary for the Indians to identify what their own modernity is and to reject the modernity that has been established by others. He draws upon Kant's concept of "enlightenment" but illustrates how, because of colonial history this proposition is not realisable for an Indian in the same way as it is for a westerner. With reference to the Indian position he writes: "Modernity for us is like a supermarket of foreign goods, displayed on the shelves: pay up and take away what you like. No one there [in the west] believes that we could be producers of modernity...All that needs to be noticed is that whereas Kant, speaking at the founding moment of western modernity, looks at the present as the site of one's escape from the past, for us it is precisely the present from which we feel we must escape...Ours is the modernity

of the once-colonised. The same, historical process that has taught us the value of modernity has also made us the victims of modernity"(p.210).

Chatterjee prompts an awareness of the historical and political context from which ideas are developed and the importance of the insider's perspective. Rutherford (1990) in his introductory chapter to his collection of essays on identity explains how in the modern world: " In the commodification of language and culture, objects and images are torn free of their original referents and their meanings become a spectacle open to almost infinite translation...The power relation is closer to tourism than imperialism, an expropriation of meaning rather than materials" (p.11). This also implies that the foundations of non-western, identities have still to assert their own meanings so they do not merge into an all-engulfing western modernism and globalisation process.

All these critiques have focused on how identity is formed by affiliation with or rejection of other groups but how identity can also be imposed. Overcoming this challenge is not easy; Hall (1990) describes how the process of colonisation has a profound effect in developing an imposed or colonised identity. He suggests that a colonised identity is a fragmented identity that has been represented and interpreted by others who have the power to circulate meanings and knowledge, those who in fact hold the cultural hegemony and can impose identities on others.

2.1. 4. Imposed identity

There is a difference between imposed identities and those that groups and individuals select for themselves that arise out of experience. These imposed identities may not fit so readily into their own views of their identities. Hall directs us to Fanon's (1990) complex analysis of

the effect of imposed identity. Fanon's focus is on the dismembering of colonised cultures by the colonizers showing two different ways of thinking about cultural identity in the context of colonisation namely by either obliterating it (by the colonisers) or reclaiming it (by the colonised). Fanon describes the nostalgic search for identity among colonised people: "passionate research ... directed by the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self contempt, resignation and abjuration, some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others."(p.167). Fanon also considers that:" Colonisation ...turns the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it "(p.167). This complex analysis in interesting contrast to Giddens identifies the historical and political impact of western social beliefs and practices upon the formulation of other colonized and more traditional views of cultural identity. Hall and Fanon examine the psychological as well as sociological impact of colonizers upon the identity and experience of the colonised.

A key point that Hall (1990) and Said (1997) make is that identity in various ways relates to how <u>others</u> see us, rather than encapsulating a cultural identity that is produced <u>within</u> a community also how others are seen as a way of identifying one's own identity. One factor identified in the literature is how a country views cultural groups who have immigrated into that country. Said (1997) describes how the western hostility towards Islam is actually a way in which the West creates a sense of its own importance. The "other" is thus distinctly embodied in Islamic beliefs, practices and "orientalist" perspectives. Said has voiced concern that the western media portrays Islam as a conglomerate mass hostile to the West: " My concern, though, is that the mere use of the label 'Islam' either to explain or indiscriminately condemn 'Islam', actually ends up becoming a form of attack, which in turn provokes more hostility between self-appointed Muslims and the Western spokespersons". (Said;1997: xvi).

However, as Hall (1990) and Fanon (1990) suggest the "other" is a not just Islam but can also be Black cultures. These cultures inevitably have non-European roots. Communities can be "marked" by outsiders as different (and homogenous) and this can affect the insider's view of self as an excluded person or group. Islamophobia is manifest in stereotypical views of Muslims and a belief that the West is implacably hostile to the non-Islamic world coupled with a belief that the Islamic faith is adhered to for political or military advantage. (Conway, 1997).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) argue that identity is based on an emphasis on difference from others to the extent that the group will exaggerate similarities and minimise differences amongst its own members. They provide evidence of the "minimal group" and suggest that group hostility can create a sense of difference and initial hostility to those outside the group. This social identity theory and studies of intergroup behaviour gives rise to the theory of "social comparison". It is useful to draw upon Moscovici's (1972) theory of social identity as one possible reason why South Asian minority groups may feel propelled to develop a sense of cohesiveness. This cohesiveness may help them to assert themselves and also to maintain a distinctive set of values and beliefs in order to withstand negative stereotyping and an inherent lack of conformity, if only expressed through appearance.

Identity then can be seen to relate to the interaction with other groups in a variety of ways, with the notion of "difference" being uppermost. As Rutherford (1990) states: " The cultural politics of difference recognises both the interdependent and relational nature of identities"(p.11). As Rassool (1990) suggests the importance of difference may be also artificially induced by images of identity that deny the cultural values and beliefs that certain minority communities uphold.

Other aspects of difference between communities include different languages as well as histories. Through the process of assimilation the majority frequently imposes their own language and devalorises, stigmatises and even eradicates other languages (Hamers and Blanc 1989). Labov (1972) in his study of the language of Black communities in the inner cities also considers the way in which language can be used to include and exclude. As Said, Hall, Chatterjee argue, "different" identities struggle to maintain their particular values and beliefs to sustain specific cultural identities. The concept of having a "minority" language or being part of a "minority" community is in itself a kind of imposed identity. Morgan (1999) in the context of working with researchers from other countries recognises the culturally bounded nature of language, which may inhibit communication.

Imposed identity on minority groups can be sharpened where two identity spheres overlap. Black women who face the kind of differentiating judgement mentioned by Said (1997) in their fight to establish their own particular social identity have considered these factors. Gaby Weiner (1997) pioneered the concept of "identity politics" and Brah and Minhas (1985) registered the influence of imperialism in social relations that implicitly affect Black people. Feminists who champion the cause of women may be just as guilty as others of stereotyping and imposing identities on the women for whom they fight. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1997) considering the challenges for liberal education in the 1990s recognises the need to consider the intersubjectivity of third world women, the need to see the lives of these women as meaningful, coherent and understandable in contrast to a western feminist view of a " homogenous, undifferentiated group leading truncated lives, victimised by the combined weight of 'their' traditions, cultures, and beliefs, and 'our' (Eurocentric) history" (p. 557). western women can be seen as: " the only legitimate subjects of the struggle, while third

world women are heard as fragmented, inarticulate voices in (and from) the dark arguing against a hastily derived notion of 'universal sisterhood' " (p.557). Here then the dominated western eurocentric feminist discourse that has a different experience and history is challenged.

Stereotyping is a particular way of imposing an identity. Ethnic minorities lack institutional credibility as they often have to face pathological views of their community's identity i.e. they are seen as deficient groups, see Vincent (1992), Modood,(1997), Gillborn and Gipps (1996). Stanfield writing about ethnic modelling argues that: "no matter how people of color define themselves, there are still the more powerful stereotypes embedded in public culture that define their status and identities within the cosmos of the dominant" (1994:182). This stereotypical view is reinforced by a sense that they are different in a way that threatens, "what is normal". Zadie Smith (2000) in her novel, *White Teeth*, describes what it is like to be a "Paki": "He Millet, was a Paki no matter where he came from; ...he smelt of curry; had no sexual identity; took other people's jobs; or had no job and bummed off the state; or gave jobs to his relatives...[and] he should go back to his own country...In short he had no face in this country; no voice in the country"(p. 234). Stereotyping undermines the complexity and diversity of different cultures and identities.

This simplification of any potential differences can be a way of marginalising certain groups rather than acknowledging their validity, diversity and ability to change. Lakoff (1987) in his analysis of categories illustrates how the prototype in a category may well not represent the range within it. Althusser's (1971) in his sociological analysis of society uses the term "interpellation" to describe the impact of stereotyping, and prejudice on self-identity. Crozier (1999) also suggests that teachers fail to recognise the heterogeneity of parents. The western

world and globalisation can be seen as attempting to simplify and homogenize identities. This perception denies the fact that groups are diverse. It is interesting that in this country ethnic monitoring forms and other bureaucratic documentation for example, do not allow ethnic minorities many identity options, rather giving them a limited choice.

This first section has drawn upon a range of literature that registers some of the tensions that confront non-western identities and suggests the existence of diverse cultures, beliefs and practices. The literature has established the dynamic situation which encompasses the sociopolitical and sociocultural dimension of identity. Some of this literature focuses on Islamic South Asian communities (Rassool, Dickinson, Chatterjee, Kakar and Said), and clearly even when these communities are not specifically mentioned the insights offered about identity are still useful. It is helpful to illuminate these perspectives further by analyzing specific South Asian ethnographic and social anthropological studies to understand what comprises South Asian identities, to understand an "insider's" perspective and learn more about the specific ways in which South Asian identities may be developing. Lee in her famous novel on racial prejudice, *To Kill a Mocking bird*, suggests that: "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around a bit " (Lee 1963: 35). Such an insight is made more possible by an ethnographic approach.

A particularly helpful perspective in reviewing literature on South Asian identities is to consider whether this literature identifies the relationship of identity with interaction as the literature in this section has identified. It should not be forgotten that in this interaction (which is dynamic and thus changing) identities are allocated to the participants and are being allocated differently as the relationships change.

2.2. Literature on South Asian identities

As noted at the beginning of this chapter writers have identified several different facets to South Asian identities: for example communal, religious and historical identities. Social anthropological essays in Ballard (1994) record some of these very different and non-western South Asian values and beliefs. Modood (1994, 1997) as a sociologist importantly locates South Asian identities within their social and political contexts and analyses the impact of these contexts upon identities and Kakar (1996) whom we have already mentioned considers the psychological dimensions to South Asian identities.

Two distinct features of South Asian identity are communality and religion (Ballard and Shaw, 1994). It is also important to discriminate between cultural and religious identity as various practices within South Asian communities emanate from these very different sources. For the purpose of clarity we will separate the communal from the religious although the two are in practice closely connected. In the following section on communality we focus particularly on the cultural aspects of communality.

2. 2.1. Communal identity

Writers identify different facets of communal identity. Ballard (1994), Shaw (1994), Levy (1995) and Minhas (1997) all describe important characteristics of this communal identity and Kakar (1996) identifies its psychological dimension and networks.

Ballard (1994) describes how entrepreneurial activities are characteristic of South Asian communities. He suggests that such activities are orchestrated through powerful kinship networks, and that these networks extend into powerful family, financial and logistical

arrangements. His positive and optimistic perception of the South Asian experience is further emphasised by his focus on migration as being an essentially "entrepreneurial" activity (p.9) by peasant farmers. "Settlers" enforced the importance of "izzat" or personal honour, which is seen as maintaining dignity and obligation to the extended family and is represented by the women. Ballard notes that although communality, co-operation and reciprocity are highly valued, there is also an acceptance of hierarchy. In a similar vein, Shaw (1994) studying Pakistani Muslim communities describes how the tightly knit biradari (family kinship groups) that are powerful and dynamic, crossing geographical boundaries, are preserved through endogamous practices among Muslim groups, enforcing particular and intricate customs, such as lena dena, (exchange of gifts) and beliefs.

A central characteristic of this communality is manifest in the position and responsibility that women hold within the communities. Mohanty's view of misrepresentative of third world women (including South Asian) has already been mentioned but other literature focuses on more positive elements. As well as maintaining the "izzat," women are also powerful within their communities in terms of their control over the family purse and customs. Shaw (1994) identifies that these practices are maintained and controlled by the women and that there are clearly defined roles for both genders. South Asian women act as custodians of their cultural beliefs and practices in their communities: they are responsible for educating their children about these beliefs and practices; they are responsible for adapting, translating and at times reinforcing this cultural knowledge within a UK context.

This emphasis on communality is reinforced by Minhas (1997) who from her experience and study of setting up Asian women's groups identifies the powerful sense of collectivity and entrepreneurial activity which exists, despite internal disputes relating to gender issues and

the pressure of racism from the outside. She describes how the sense of collectivity and expectations of group work that comes from experience of family life made group enterprises easy to achieve. For example, the groups soon produced their own Asian cookbook and a tape of Punjabi folk singing. She also identified certain characteristics that applied to South Asian communities. For instance these communities were good at self-promotion through networking because they have a sophisticated and well-established sense of group and community, but she saw that it was essential to acknowledge the power of the community's judgements to gain credibility for fieldwork. She also noted that cultural identity, family focus and community rather than individual identification were essential concerns.

Levy (1995) writing about culture in Nepal describes the complex ways in which the Bhaktapur (Nepali) Elders in contrast to western adults perceive their sense of "self "and thus how to socialise their children. In Bhaktapur, Elders believe that the child needs to be taught everything, and there is a systematic way in which this is achieved. This emphasis on adult "scaffolding"(Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976) is also related to a sense of interdependence and dependence rather than fostering independence. Here then the child's identity is seen completely within the context of the adults who are socializing him or her. Kakar (1996), whose focus is on Indian identities, describes the individual's affiliations to their collective group as well. (This is similar to the different eastern self-identity that Levy (1995) alludes to): "Group identity is an extended part of the individual self-experience, although the intensity of the experience varies across individuals and time. It can range from feelings of nominal affiliation with the group to a deep identification or even to feelings of fusion, where any perceived harm to the group's interests or threats to its 'honor' are reacted to as strongly as damage to one's own self" (Kakar: ix-iix). Ghuman (1999) in his work on Asian adolescents notes how collectivity versus individualism can represent polarities between

eastern and western perception that then filters into a range of cognitive, affective and social difference. Thus, some Asian adolescents may construe their future not so much in terms of their personal aspirations but rather in terms of communal needs and family requirements. Although a sense of communality exists among westerners, it may be less embedded in their self-identity.

Kakar also acknowledges the difference between a secular Anglo/American and an Indian concept of communal existence. He sees the former as a concept that suggests a form of altruism and civic-mindedness not necessarily tied to any religious body. However, he sees the latter as exclusively attached to an individual's community and with that an implied hostility to others. Kakar's interpretation emphasises the intensity of the feeling of belonging within groups and potential hostility to outsiders.

In this way it can be seen that Kakar, Ghuman and Minhas, mentioned earlier, identify a complex mixture of particular cognitive, affective and social dimensions that comprise South Asian identities and strengthen communal development. As registered above this focus on communality is closely linked to the sense of group identification and empathy that exists for those who belong to a religious group. The powerful, ordered familial networks within South Asian communities are further strengthened by religious identity.

2.2.2. Religious identity

Religious identities among South Asian communities are diverse. In this thesis we consider Sikh and Islamic identities only because there was no significant Hindu population in the community studied. An "Islamic" identity might seem to signal a fixed kind of identity. However Lewis (1994), in his study of South Asian groups, identifies the four different

Islamic groups that exist in Bradford and provides illustrations of the complexity of and differences amongst this Islamic population. His evidence defies the perception that Islam is monolithic and fundamentalist. He argues that the inflammatory situation that arose over the publication of Rushdie's Satanic Verses created the negative perception of Islamic groups as fundamentalist and separatist, and that prior to this the Islamic presence in the UK was hardly noticed. In other words Lewis draws attention to the identity provided by outsiders by contrast to the identity experienced in insiders. In fact the origins of various movements are based upon differences about the interpretation of the Koran as well as the threat of other faiths and practices and are further complicated by biradari affiliations, of cultural origin, as well as the different experiences of different generations.

There is not just the diversity within Islamic groups as Lewis has already identified. Ballard (1994) identifies the dynamic qualities in Sikhism and its political as well as religious origins. He describes how Sikhism was a revolutionary struggle to address the inequalities that the caste system imposed and to synthesise and develop the more positive elements of both Islam and Hinduism. It could be considered the equivalent of the development of Quakers within Christianity. However, its emphasis on equality creates contradictions and paradoxes. While there is an emphasis on communality there is also an acceptance that people should find their own solutions to their way of life. Ballard (1994) clarifies how Sikhism also has its own contradictions and range of interpretations. Sikhism combines individualism with communal enterprize. He notes that the Sikh religious practice is strongly congregational: both the preparation of food in the Langar and the recitations in the Diwan are a vital part of their practice. Contradictions of sect, caste, occupation, power, wealth and personal rivalry are endemic to the Sikh society and have often led to disunity. Once more permanent residence in the UK became popular the various religious and geographical groups

created their own cultural bases and established a much more diverse cultural identity. They invested in building their own Gurdwaras and Temples, and responded quite differently to the political climate. Yet Ballard (1994) argues that despite factionalism there are many substantial, remarkable and collective achievements that the Sikhs have attained. The Sikh immigrants of the 1950's and 60's formed the Indian Workers Association (IWA) and engaged in industrial action to combat inequality within the labour force. However, Sikhs are also renowned for their business entrepreneurial strength and successful private enterprise. They compete with each other as well as with others.

Although there may be differences in religious practices, the role of religion in the life of South Asians can be similar. Thus it is important to explore the deeper psychological reasons why members of South Asian communities affiliate with a particular cultural or religious group at a psychological level. Communality and religious, rather than secular, belief as Ballard (1994) has identified, provide the channels and means through which the cultures are maintained and developed; they provide the foundations or context for understanding responses expressed. Therefore these elements need to be understood in more depth at a psychological level to understand their power and influence at an intra-group and personal level; Kakar (1996) and Armstrong (2000) offer us this insight.

Kakar (1996) sees the fight for religious beliefs and practices as emanating from a deep inner sense of personal and communal identification with a particular set of beliefs and practices. He also understands how religious identities can predominate over other group identities: "overarching religious identities have become salient and dwarfed other group identities [because] 'primordial' group identities based on class, profession ...perhaps lack an encompassing worldview, are impoverished in their symbolic riches and devoid of that

essential corpus of myths in which people have traditionally sought meaning, especially at a time when their world appears to have become meaningless." (p.4 and p.148). He goes on to emphasise that: "[primordiality] related to shared myths, memories, values and symbols ...assumes a vital healing function, shared idealism to...ties of loyalty ...intense moments...feelings of fusion and merger. Experientially ...reordering and opening up the inner world of the individual in their psychological space ...[there is a] profound effect [that] the group can have on the consolidation of a person's 'sense of identity' and increasingly the cohesiveness of the self."(p.149). It is difficult to assess which identity does predominate as we have only Kakar's perception, however, both Modood (1994) and Ballard (1994) have registered the importance of this identity within the corpus of South Asian identities.

Kakar also explores the dynamics of religious conflict e.g. between Hindus and Muslims and this insight is useful in terms of the factionalism that can exist between communities. These differences mean that there is no homogenous or monolithic identity for South Asian communities as there are many religious sects within each religious identity. His view confirms Said's (1997) insight into the way that the West perpetuates a view of Islam as a monolithic, fundamentalist power. Said also draws our attention to the misunderstanding that arises out of this misconception of Islam, he writes: " 'Islam' defines a relatively small proportion of what actually takes place in the Islamic world, which numbers a billion people....an infinite number of different experiences...Aside from the combination of hostility and reductionism offered by these misinterpretations, there is the matter of how grossly they exaggerate and inflate Muslim extremism within the Muslim world....[In the politics of dispossession] I attempted to show how it was secularism, rather than fundamentalism, that held the Arab Muslim communities together...he [with reference to Lewis a senior British orientalist] simply cannot deal with the diversity of Muslim...life

because it is closed to him as something foreign, radically different, and other" (Said;1997:xxvi - xxxi). South Asian identities then are multifaceted, incorporating a powerful religious facet that may overarch and imbue other identities. This facet represents a definite schism with many western identities where religion has been rejected.

Karen Armstrong (2000) in her profound analysis of Islam, Christianity and Judaism identifies the roots to misunderstandings that can occur between secular and non-secular worldviews and reveals the incompatibilities between the two. She describes how religious identity is closely tied to a whole cultural world that reflects not only particular beliefs but rather a belief in beliefs. Myths and legends as well as religious beliefs become part of the meaning in life. She identifies the difference between a spiritual meaning in life and the pragmatic rationalism of the West. She describes the difference between "logos" and "mythos" both of which existed within the pre-modern world and were regarded as indispensable. However, she realises that as modernisation is based purely upon logos (or rational arguments) it can discount mythos as false and superstitious. However, logos cannot answer questions about the ultimate value of human life, the meaning of life. Mythos (myth and cult) is less concerned with what actually happens and more concerned with the meaning of an event. The modern world is seen as future-orientated and for technological as well as philosophical reasons able to ignore the past (and myths). For those religions and cultures that still recognise the importance of mythos, " modernisation is often experienced not as a liberation but as an aggressive assault "(p.xvi). Furthermore, Abu-Lughod (1986) describes how poetry is closely woven into the personal life, meanings and beliefs for cultures that draw upon an Arabic tradition. For such religions and cultures the western atheistic and secular world may by contrast appear predominantly cynical and meaningless.

To summarise, Kakar (1996) and Armstrong (2000) provide powerful insights into the challenges that South Asian communities face in a western world and Abu- Lughod draws our attention to the way both cultural and religious elements in a non-western society provide a powerful combination of meaning for their members. Affiliation with these roots is particularly visible when despite emigration, from for example, Sylhet in Bangladesh, families living in the UK still send bodies back to the Subcontinent to be buried there (Gardner and Shukar, 1994). The facets then of the South Asian community are their different selves, which belong to their local community in the UK but also to their community in their homeland.

These key elements are also substantiated and affected by the history of communities as well as by their geographical roots.

2.2.3. Historical identity

In Ballard's (1994) accounts we become aware that the South Asian identities that develop in the West are imbued with complex histories and geographies that are to differing degrees amenable to western influences. To appraise their influence and value it is important to acknowledge the potential strength of these historical, geographical and familial roots.

Ballard (1994) alerts us to the fact that an important aspect of historical/geographical/social identity is the South Asians' view of their homeland. Desh Pardesh means," home from home" and/or " at home abroad" including the importance of self-determination that relies on a strong sense of cultural identity as well as an ability to adapt to contexts. Ballard's (1994) compilation of essays describes the adaptive strategies that all South Asian settlers have devised. He argues that " since their ethnicity is intrinsic to their very being, the resultant

loyalties are a major resource in the reconstruction of survival strategies: hence they are unlikely to be abandoned"(p. 8). Furthermore, as we have already noted, when women joined their husbands in the UK they enforced the biraderis, thus strengthening historical ties with their countries of origin and reestablishing a non-western set of cultural practices.

Furthermore, historical events and crises like the partition between Pakistan and Bangladesh leave scars in the relationships between Muslim and Hindu communities (see Kakar, 1996) and Conway and Haque (1999) analyzing Bangladeshi autobiographical memories register the impact of the war between Pakistan and present Bangladesh on Bangladeshi's memories. These conflicts in turn affect the communities living in the UK. This factionalism is one important characteristic of South Asian communities. Diversity is also a very distinctive feature of these communities in general.

2.2.4. Diverse identities

Ballard (1994) argues that diversity predominates among South Asian communities and that differences are not just religious and cultural but also very localized and particular in terms of South Asian customs and beliefs - they have quite parochial identities. Ballard (1994) cautions against the perception that South Asians are like the White working class in their aspirations, strategies and expectations. He considers that they differ sharply. He also argues that a focus on racism and wider, more structural critical analysis, though not irrelevant does not capture the cultural diversity that exists as communities increase in size and are strongly committed to cultural and religious reconstruction. He emphasizes the " never-ending series of puzzles, contradictions", (p.9) which are intensified through the different generations' experiences and responses to living in the UK as some still have a memory of living in India and miss the sights, smells and familiar sights of India.

Hutnik (1991) in her study of responses to ethnic monitoring forms also draws our attention to the individual diversity within these communities in relation to their response to living in the UK and affiliation with either a South Asian or UK British identity. She argues that South Asians living in the UK may affiliate with their ancestry to varying degrees, which in turn affects their sense of self-esteem.

Modood (1994; 1997) emphasises the diverse, distinctive features of these communities (community languages, religion, marriage partners, visits to the country of origin, choice of clothes and schools). He also discusses the challenges that these can present. In particular he identifies movement and change across the generations and decades of immigration. Furthermore, Modood in contrast to Ballard focuses less on descriptive details and more on the socio-political and economic context that impacts upon ethnic minority cultures. In particular Modood (1994) identifies that familial connections and marriages into the same religious group, especially for Muslims, is still maintained for economic and social reasons. Some parents are modifying cultural practices and the young people are not inevitably tied to their land of origin though they might not identify themselves as British. However, he notes that whether the identity is based upon an association with cultural identity or based on practices carried out, assimilation into the wider UK culture is still by no means predictable. At the end of his qualitative study of South Asian and other ethnic minority groups he asserts that ethnic identity: " is a plastic and changing badge of membership. Ethnic identity is a product of a number of forces; social exclusion and stigma and political resistance to them, distinctive cultural and religious heritages as well as new forms of culture, communal and familial loyalties, marriage practices, coalition of interests...the boundaries are unclear and shifting, especially when groups seek to broaden an ethnic identity or accommodate

membership in a number of overlapping groups. And this leaves out social, economic and political forces " (1994:119).

Gardner and Shukar (1994), also within Ballard's compilation, register the intergenerational differences as well as the different experiences of those born and educated on the Subcontinent rather than within the UK. To a limited extent the authors address the problems of integration and cross-cultural tension that may exist for South Asian communities. In particular Gardner and Shukar record the challenges that some of the young people face and different degrees of identification with UK society that they express. This dimension of diversity is reinforced by Minhas (1997) who has already been referred to in the section on communal identities.

Ballard's compilation accentuates the diverse values, beliefs and practices in South Asian communities that contrast with those of the West. This compilation also draws our attention to the variation of practices that emanate from different locations: every group of South Asian communities within the UK will have its own particular ways of construing and implementing their non-western beliefs and practices although families may extend their networks across the UK. However this compilation tends to separate out each group as if it exists independently of any other group in a separate location. In fact these groups exist in multicultural setting where there are not just for example Muslims from Pakistan. The interaction across cultural/religious groups in terms of responses is not researched and therefore this compilation does not offer an insight into the dynamic interaction across cultural, ideological and religious divides.

Dynamic and diverse elements within South Asian communities promote change and exchange among various groups and can be seen to emanate from their sense of identification with various influences. This sense of identification affects the type of responses that individuals and groups have to the wider society including the educational system. The diverse and mutable nature of identity means that even within clearly identified groups or facets of South Asian communities there is difference at many levels. Furthermore the evidence above suggests a series of potential challenges that impact upon South Asian communities at various levels, both externally and internally; this in turn will influence the responses that have been identified in the literature.

2.3. Identity revealed through responses

The literature has in general alerted us to the range of different beliefs, practices, histories and identities among South Asian communities. Different contexts and circumstances influence people to respond and develop their identities in a variety of ways. To accommodate this range of possibilities it is worthwhile to note the diverse ways in which Kakar(1996), Ghuman (1999, 1997 &1998), Modood (1994 & 1997), Hutnik (1991) and Rassool (1999) have analysed the responses of ethnic minorities and/or South Asian people in particular. However, first it is useful to refer to literature that considers the wider range of contexts and identities at a global level: Hall (1990), Castells (1997) and Kakar (1996) have considered this level of response.

2. 3.1. A response to globalisation and nationalism

There are responses that emphasise the rejection of a dominant culture and identity. For instance Castells (1997) writing in the context of "the information age" gives a rationale for the importance of ethnicity and identity in the present state of western-dominated values and

beliefs and identifies three types of identity that can reflect, react and develop out of the social and political climate of increased globalization. His first type: "legitimising identity" is represented by the dominant institution and his second and third are a response to this identity and imposition. His second: "resistance identity" recognises the fact that other values such as Islam are devalued and stigmatised. This response is manifest in a form of enclosure and strengthening of particular communities' non-western values and beliefs combined with a rejection of globalisation. Castells argues that these devalued communities react against the denial of their particular cultural ideologies, identities and customs.

Taking this view South Asian communities and religious minority communities within the UK can thus attempt to resist the white, western, secular and most threateningly culturally indistinct image that globalization may appear to have. Rassool (1999) notes that second generation immigrants may " dis-identify with the dominant cultures, as a means of rejecting the culture of those who reject and marginalize them as 'other'." (p. 30).

2.3.2. There are also responses that imply a rejection of one's own identity. Kenneth and Mamie Clark's (1947) study of children's self perceptions revealed that Black children sometimes identify themselves as White, implying that these children feel that their Black identity undermines their self esteem. This is understandable in the light of Modood's (1994) argument that Black (African Caribbean and Asian minorities) are responding to the negative response to their identities that the host country, in this case the UK, gives them.

Kakar explains that "feelings of humiliation and radically lowered self –worth" (p.146) may ensue because globalisation encroaches on traditional group solidarities, and like modernisation does not respect cultural pluralities and diversities. He also suggests that

bureaucratic structures can appear to be dehumanizing. The non-western worlds have also suffered, as mentioned earlier, the additional humiliation of the marginalisation of their civilisations in the colonial encounters that have taken place in their world.

In relation to the process of modernisation Kakar (1996) writes: "bereavement and states of withdrawal among those mourning for old attachments and suspicious of creating new identities ...hinder birth of new social structures and forms while they rob much of community of its vitality and therefore capacity for counteracting the sense of helplessness" (p. 146). Here then the confirmation of self is not assertive but rather negative in terms of avoiding a new culture. Kakar thus gives some explanation for the more reactionary and conservative elements that might exist within a community suffering from this kind of bereavement.

2.3.3. However, responses can also be demonstrated as demonstrating self-assertion or self-confirmation. This self-assertion can be revealed in a number of ways: increased fanaticism, diversity and withdrawal from the host society. Castells (1997) illustrates the way in which attempts at global hegemony inadvertently challenge communities to assert themselves, to carve a place for themselves under the threat of being annihilated. Modood (1994) draws attention to the complex range of factors, from racism to cultural knowledge and pride that produce a reaction to maintain distinctive South Asian rather than either a hyphenated or British identity. He found that Asians " [used] their ethnicity to assert their rights ...some second generation Asians seem to feel their Britishness is more precarious or dependent on them giving up their parent culture... most ...made no mention of a positive British heritage...[this was] in striking contrast to their declarations about the importance of their own ancestry and heritage."(p.106).

Kakar (1996), like Castells recognizes that globalization can have a dramatic effect on communities that are alienated from western ideology or technology. He reveals how modernisation itself promotes an increase in fanaticism and fundamentalism because it dismisses the importance of different ideologies to "the dust heap of history." (p.196).

The existence of globalisation can also paradoxically intensify the development of diversity, as various different beliefs and practices attempt to assert their identity independently of a global culture. Castells (1997) argues that the process of globalisation and attempted westernization and homogenization of identity in fact spawns a whole new set of diverse identities.

2.3.4. Castells also identifies a third kind of identity: "projected identities" that deal with the need to have a new and more progressive identity and he cites the example of feminism. He argues that resistance identity is invariably a reaction against materialism and a refuge against a hostile world (often manifest in religious belief) and that it has the potential to reconstruct national identity if it becomes a projected identity. One of his main thrusts is the need for meaning in our lives that is created through identity and ethnicity. He identifies how communes of resistance defend their space, their places. Importantly for the focus of this thesis he articulates the importance of development from resistance (that is valid but which as a defence can be constraining and conservative) to more liberating projected identities.

Globalisation has been seen then to invoke a variety of responses varying from acceptance to rejection. However there are particular areas within South Asian communities, namely gender and generation, where responses are also likely to be different in quite specific ways.

2.4. Responses of South Asian women

As mentioned earlier South Asian women are expected to represent the "izzat" or honour of a family. They face particular pressures to conform and to rear children in a traditional manner in circumstances in the UK, where they do not have the same extended family to support them as they would have in their countries of origin. They are also at the cross-roads of contrasting cultural perceptions of women as represented by the difference between attitudes to gender in the east and the west. Their response to these circumstances and expectations are correspondingly diverse.

Amrit Wilson (1978) describes how families expect their women to uphold and preserve their culture and emphasises the social pressures on Asian women to conform. She also describes the loneliness and depression which Asian women can experience isolated from their extended family in India and aware of a moral responsibility to observe strict cultural practices for their community in the UK. She notes how powerful communal networks are broken because of the geographical separation from the extended family abroad. Separated from the means by which these cultural practices are sustained can create a crisis for some women. One might expect that this analysis of the situation in the late 1970's would have changed by the 1990's but this is not always the case. There are many indications that conformity and isolation continue. Dickinson (1997) in her study of young Asian women argues that, although there is evidence of families sending their girls back to Pakistan for arranged marriages if they try to escape into the wider community, there is also evidence of more educated and emancipated young women selecting to have an arranged marriage.

Zarina Bhimji (1990) in a composition of photographic images titled "Live for the Sharam and die for the Izzat" conveys the pain that some Asian women face torn between different

cultures and ultimately unable to belong to either any more. Verity Salfullah Khan (1982) provides case studies of the crisis which South Asian girls face when caught in the midst of this cross- fire. Women facing this crisis could well be unable to address the same problem, which their own children face. A recent report on "Growing up young, Asian and female in Britain: a report on self-harm and suicide" (1998) funded by the Newham innercity multifund is a qualitative study based in the inner city in London which raises concern about the situation for a disturbing percentage of young women. This study endorses the perspectives that Wilson (1978) and Salfullah Khan (1982) offer and indicates a lack of change for certain women and as well as a disturbing response to the pressures they face.

Another area difficult for South Asian women is the clash between western views of male/female relationships and South Asian views. Shaw quotes a South Asian Pakistani participant's perception of western attitudes to women. " English women are like toys for men to play with. They are outside, out on the streets, in shops; or on the television. They are cheap and they are for anyone to take."(1994: 53). Shaw argues that that greatest fear for Pakistani women is that their men should establish relationships with English women. Any response then from South Asian women will in this context of what is seen as a corrupting cultural image of women. It is interesting to note that this view of women from a South Asian perspective may be a view that non South Asian English women do not share themselves.

As well as conformity though there has historically been some emancipation. Women's position as noted earlier includes some responsibility for the financial and educational success of their children, and through this they have also sometimes emancipated themselves, by securing a right to their own educational achievement and thereby a means to value their traditional positions (see Dickinson, 1997). Some educated South Asian women also

differentiate between their cultural and religious identities, emphasising the more egalitarian and liberating aspects of their religion (Luthra, 1997). For those who attempt to elope with other men (flouting the traditional arrangements), they can find that their romantic expectations are often not fulfilled. Therefore the possibility of emancipation places them in a precarious position where there is a fine balance between what can change and what must remain to preserve the izzat and family networks. Emancipation is therefore not inevitable. Rassool (1995) in her study of Black feminists notes the complexities, contradictions, ambiguity and transformative power of black feminist identities. The diversity of response is particularly apparent in the range of dress that South Asian women wear.

Dress represents cultural values and beliefs and with it the symbolic affiliation and assertion of a specific cultural identity as for example with "izzat". As South Asian women are more easily identified in terms of their dress this particularly distinctive display of cultural values may be more open to criticism from outsiders and thus a pressing concern for young women. For South Asians to claim, describe and assert their own identity they must expose it often through dress and this may have a paradoxical effect within the UK context. Displaying your affiliation or identification can place you in a vulnerable position. You no longer remain "independent," you visibly belong to a group. Joshi (1997) writing about Hindu women's dress notes that: " The dress of Hindu men and women is primarily governed by concepts of purity and pollution, which are important governing principles of Hindu society...the rules and attitudes are passed from mother to daughter and mother-in-law and are supported and reinforced through folk idioms, discipline of tradition and media [in India]"(pp.214 -226), and Leslie (1997) notes that the Indian women's dress also establishes her authority at home. Khan (1992) recognises that the situation is complicated but can also be resolved: " While initial fashion moves in the subcontinent coincide with greater independence for women, a

more complex scenario developed in Britain...people overseas [in the UK] cling to what gradually become more and more old ways. The pressure on their youngsters not to change can be extreme and is countered by another pressure, from white society, to conform to its ways. The words 'crisis of identity' are often glibly and too easily used. But Asian girls who grew up in Britain in the earlier days of immigration will know very well, and painfully, what such words mean – to speak subjectively- the hatred of having one's hair oiled and tightly plaited...embarrassment of wide Punjabi trousers...As a result, young women tend not so much to reject their culture as to keep it discreetly to themselves. British on the streets, Asian at home; one behaviour at school, another at home."(pp.67-8).

This declaration of belonging through dress expresses levels of conformity that a western emphasis on autonomy can deride as a form of inhibition of freedom of expression or as subservience and dependency perhaps in the way that Mohanty (1997) does. There is a paradox however because it demands a certain degree of independence from the wider society to express different values and beliefs through your appearance. In a sense western identity appears to allow for an expression of individuality and autonomy, but this in itself is surprisingly limiting and, by contrast to "other" cultures, does focus on certain very particular values and beliefs, essentially those of the western world and capitalism. Dress conveys money and fashion. Furthermore its independence of expression – an apparent denial of community values and meanings is associated with very different customs and ideologies e.g. that women can and are encouraged to expose the shape of their bodies and that men are not expected to cover themselves in trinkets and wear dresses. In this context "being independent" is also a shared community value. Therefore those South Asian women who wear South Asian clothes may be asserting their own independent values and beliefs confidently and reinforce Shaw's interpretation of the way South Asian women are coping

(1994). Alternatively when women are not wearing South Asian clothes they may be just avoiding the negative response of the host culture as Khan has described (1992). However, Khan also notes how South Asian women are constantly adapting their designs, adjusting to different influences: " Walk down any street in a so-called 'Asian area' and you can see the range of allegiances now presented: saris and home-made Shalwar, designers' suits and jeans. Mobility and choice are far greater than only ten years ago."(p. 73-4). Here then there does seem to have been some change historically.

Nonetheless, appearance is unlikely to be the only indicator of what women experience and express. Hutnik (1991) and Modood (1994) mentioned earlier, suggest affirming a South Asian identity does not necessarily indicate that the person will adopt cultural practices. It is important to examine the diverse way in which affiliation to a South Asian identity may also be manifest in a non-South-Asian way. This more complex response has become apparent over the last two decades and Basit (1997) in her study of South Asian young women has usefully alerted us to the constant negotiations that young South Asian women are involved with in her article: *" I want more freedom but not too much."* It is also important to register that although there has been frequent mention of Muslim and Pakistani practices as represented by the concept of the biraderi, Sikh women face a different set of principles both in terms of cultural practices and religious expectations, which Bhachu (1988) claims are potentially emancipating for their women.

There is then for women a continuation of some practices historically but also some indication of new ways of behaving.

2. 5. Responses of different age groups and different generations

We have already seen that Modood (1994) and Gardner and Shukar (1994) comment on the different kinds of problems faced by different generations. The responses from different generations may also be different as indicated earlier in the discussion of dress. It is important in this context to consider the history of the South Asian community. Luthra (1997) notes that the South Asians who came from the Subcontinent in the 1950's and 60's had no intention of becoming permanent residents. In this case then there would be no need to adapt to the UK values. Longer residence has revealed increasing diversity within both the Muslim and Sikh communities. As noted earlier the Rushdie affair generated both right wing and fanaticist responses in the Muslim community and also different Muslim left-wing responses. The Sikhs appear to have absorbed or integrated more of the western beliefs and ways of life into their everyday experience than other South Asian groups though they continue to wear their traditional costumes more often and identify themselves as Sikhs. Minhas (1997) has noted the difference across generation differences. Pakekh (1994) comments on changes in religious practices and suggests that decline in attendance to places of worship does not necessarily represent a decline in faith. More recent developments of Ashrafication and Sanskritisation (Luthra, 1997) indicate that the Asian population continues to develop its own specific cultural beliefs, values and status within eastern demarcations. Ashrafication is the process whereby Muslims from a lower economic position can upgrade their status through dress and means of worship. Sanskritisation is a process whereby lower caste Indians enhance their status and acquire the characteristics of higher castes.

A crucial factor in generational differences in responses is the greater flexibility of the younger generation in terms of language. Ballard (1994) argues that the young are in fact very capable of cultural navigation as they are often multi- or bilingual as well, unlike the

monolingual disposition of most of the UK population. He says this is eased because parents do not ask too many questions and tend to take a " blind eye" strategy. He refers to the adaptability and creativity of the young who have developed contrasting forms of cultural identity e.g. the combination of Bhangra and reggae by the Punjabi Apache Indian group in Birmingham. He alludes to the active and reactive engagement that young people have in developing their cultural identity. Gardner and Shukur (1994) argue that Bengalis' experience of white racism provides a central component to their self-definition. They quote one twenty-four year old who has lived in the UK since she was four years old: " I know lots about Bengali culture and religion. We know our roots, but we're westernised, no doubt about that. But at the end of the day, you're brown aren't you "(p.162).

However, cross-cultural tensions can create identity crises as for adolescents, who are also generally identified as experiencing an identity crisis. South Asian adolescents are particularly challenged on both accounts. Ghuman (1999) as noted at the beginning of this chapter develops this complex area. There is a need to develop a greater understanding of how children, who live out their identity in relation to contradictory values and beliefs, survive and negotiate their sense of autonomy and group belonging. For this insight we can turn to Basit (1997) mentioned earlier, who describes the tensions between western and South Asian values and practices for young South Asian women. Like Rassool (1999), Basit emphasizes the fluidity of identity and the negotiation that these young people are continuously involved in as they face negative stereotyping from both sides: their parents' perspectives about the wider UK culture as well as their teachers about their South Asian cultures.

For those who have lived on the Subcontinent the connection, with a country of origin, is often very powerful and important. This can represent a significant difference between generations and yet arranged marriages between the Subcontinent and the UK means that there is also a younger generation who will have been raised on the Subcontinent. According to Gardner and Shukar (1994) those who visit Bangladesh may find this can become a psychological escape in the face of disparagement and adversity. Some Bangladeshis enjoy their visit home though the women can also be aware of the different levels of modesty and liberation.

Kakar (1996) argues that despite an initial attempt to become assimilated into western societies, the second generation of South Asians has opted to seek out their origins. "Many migrants, who have willingly chosen to thoroughly assimilate themselves into their new societies and appear to have lost all traces of their ethnic origins, are surprised to find that the issues of cultural identity have not disappeared. They have only skipped a generation ...sons and daughters...have become preoccupied with their cultural roots as part of their quest for a personal identity" (p.150). However this quest may also be disappointing Gardner and Shukar (1994) describe the shock that a sixth former UK born Bangladeshi experiences when he visits Bangladesh for the first time. His own relative affluence and the extreme poverty he sees lie in strong contrast, and his romantic dream of Sylhet as a lush, beautiful exotic place is likely to fade. This development indicates that a rejection of South Asian cultural identity may only be temporary; it is not easy for the younger generation to fit into either a distinctively British or South Asian identity. South Asian sources of identification may be all the more powerful when communities and individuals experience a sense of alienation in the UK wider society (see Modood, 1994).

There is however in the literature some lack of recognition of the complexity of differences between generations, which is revealed by this overview of the literature. Writers tend to opt for one view (retaining conventions) or another (diverging) rather than showing the complexities of generational responses. Children may not fit into the religious groups of their parents and may thus respond differently. Lewis (1994) also mentions the under-representation of the 16 – 25 year old group in Islam due to their lack of understanding of Urdu or Punjabi, though they can find the devotional music accessible. However, gradually young Muslims are establishing a place on their own terms (Luthra, 1997). Islam is interpreted in diverse ways relating to differences between generations, experiences and knowledge available. As with the Muslim youth the younger generation of Sikhs, born in the UK can become bewildered by the growing conservatism among their Sikh leaders, which places them under pressure to conform. A lack of linguistic knowledge also means that they have limited understanding of Sikh history and theology (see Luthra,1997).

2.6. Conclusion

In general the literature in this chapter has offered us insight into the reasons why South Asian communities maintain distinctive cultural identities and also registered the changing and diverse elements that they comprise. There are different kinds of responses: expressions of resistance and rejection of the dominant culture and identity or one's own identity, some more assertive responses increasing fanaticism and also producing diversity as well as withdrawal. There are also different responses from different age groups, experiences, cultural backgrounds, religious identities, lands of origin, between genders and generations, reflecting considerable changes observable over time. There is also a recognition of differing contexts including the context of globalisation and nationalism. Castell's categories of response to globalisation is particularly useful: resisting any outside influences, capitalizing

on ethnic roots and identities and projecting new identities (see also Luthra, 1997). There is however, no coherent theoretical analysis, equivalent to Castell's categories at the complex micro level.

In relation to the focus of this thesis literature at an inter- and intra-group level is especially useful when the diversity of both identities and contexts are considered, as well factors that may inhibit an easy exchange for members of South Asian communities with the wider society (see Modood; 1994, 1997). However it is noticeable that the links from the wider global context to UK, to the South Asian communities and finally to the personal intrapersonal level have not been considered as a whole. Individual authors have helped us to understand a facet or group of interacting variables but not the whole picture. Just to identify the difference between western and eastern identity or, even the range of identities that combine to represent a South Asian set of identities is not sufficient. The analyses in literature do not convey the more transient, dynamic and ultimately diverse elements that are "lived" in communities. There is a need to provide a more in-depth analysis of conflicts and challenges that these communities face in their attempts to develop and maintain their South Asian identities in the way that Kakar (1996) and Armstrong (2000) for example have examined, and also to place these challenges in contexts.

Responses recorded in ethnographic literature at this level also remain descriptive, emphasizing diversity but not revealing the movement that occurs in everyday interactions across various South Asian communities and between the wider society and the South Asian communities. The question of situated identities changing according to context is important. Individuals and groups who identify themselves as non- British or predominantly South Asian within a western, UK context may not have a clear response relating to either Castells'

resistance or projected identity but rather be in a process of crystallising a certain identity or and of attempted resolution of identity conflicts, confronting conflicting beliefs and practices.

This vulnerability and uncertainty may be heightened in particular contexts. Despite an awareness of problems and tensions within the literature there are still problems of communication between people from different cultures. The literature analyzed in this chapter generally lacks an implementation dimension: how to mobilize the insights gained to effect communication.

School represents one forum in which cultural identities have the potential to flourish and develop through the social, cognitive and affective community it gathers together. It is to this home/school literature that we turn in the following chapter to address the research question and search for reasons for why there is a lack of communication with South Asian parents and what may constitute the differences between South Asian homes and school.

CHAPTER THREE

SOUTH ASIAN HOME AND SCHOOL DISCONTINUTIES

3.0.This chapter considers literature on the cultural discontinuities between home and school which South Asian pupils may experience. Both literature on South Asian communities and on the home/school divide in general has been included. Research suggests that there are qualitative differences between home and school in terms of both the type of knowledge circulated and also the way in which this knowledge is circulated (Dunn, 1993; Alldred, David and Edwards 2001; Gregory, 1994; Harkness and Super, 1995; Reay, 1998; Vincent, 1992). These differences are likely to be problematic when there is a lack of communication between the school and home. In general, research tends to take a school-based approach and consequently to look at ethnic minority problems from this perspective: it can exclude the wider contexts that the communities engage in. It is important to evaluate literature and theory that covers the various dimensions in the South Asian communities' relationship with mainstream schooling to begin to understand the issues that arise for South Asian pupils and parents. Luthra (1997) in his work on the Black population in the UK draws attention to the wider context that exists for the child and notes that cultural identities have diversified and increased in Black communities. He argues that: " The British educational system contributes little to shaping these [Black and Asian] identities. It has failed to provide intellectual tools to the young to analyse and locate diversity in a comprehensible and meaningful framework. " (p. 33). There are differences between communities and within communities that need to be understood within the context of the home/school experience for South Asian pupils and parents.

This chapter is divided into four overall sections: Bourdieu, the institutional level, the parent/school level and the child's level. This chapter will start with an introduction to Bourdieu (1977, 1979,1992,1997) who provides key theories relating to home/school relationships. The second section analyses the institutional educational context for South Asian communities. In the light of policy developments the section reviews tensions created by cultural diversity in the context of a prominently English/British curriculum and the use of standardised testing and a focus on performance and competitive assessment which undercuts the issues that arise for race and ethnic minority communities. This includes literature that identifies the constraints imposed on teachers by the National Curriculum and their perspectives.

The third section considers literature that focuses upon parents' key socialising role and the cultural and personal differences within this area. It considers literature that identifies the clash between home/school agendas, especially non-middle-class White homes, who are in a less powerful position in the home/school relationship.

The final section evaluates literature on the position and experience of the child who is at the crossroads of the problems in home/school relationship.

3.1. Bourdieu

A good starting point for considering the relationship between school and home is Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital" which helps us to realise the way in which the school can dismiss and devalue the knowledge that some children bring from their communities and homes. Although Bourdieu does not consider the situation for South Asian pupils and parents, as a leading educational thinker, he does look at the long-term effects of education

and the meanings of education for society in general. He also registers the complexities of the socio-political dimension in which certain values and beliefs dominate over others. His concept of cultural capital encapsulates the way in which the educational system selects, disseminates and prioritises certain knowledge and he points to the qualitative difference between school and home cultural knowledge. Bourdieu's cultural capital represents the dominant values, beliefs and customs that people are encouraged to aspire to and that are circulated and acquired through certain relationships and family connections. In relation to cultural capital Bourdieu writes: "Students are not only users but also products of the educational system...social origin exerts its influence throughout the whole duration of schooling...the socially conditioned predisposition to adapt oneself to the models, rules, and values which govern the school system, in short, the whole set of factors that make pupils feel and seem to be 'at home' or 'out of place' in the school, result...in an unequal rate of scholastic achievement between the social classes...Thus the direct influence of the cultural habits and the dispositions inherited from the original milieu [home] is amplified by the multiplier effect of the scholastic streamings and channelings...which trigger the second action of determinants, which are all the more potent because they are expressed in the specific logic of schooling, in the form of sanctions which consecrate social inequalities while apparently ignoring them" (1979: 13-14).

Bourdieu's capital is transformed into academic capital within the school context and reinforces the cultural values of the middle classes and the elite. Others may not have the resources to access it. Furthermore Bourdieu describes how there are considerable barriers to overcoming this disadvantage: " Moreover, the economic and social yield of the educational qualification depends upon the social capital, again inherited, which can be used to back it up " (Bourdieu, 1997: 48). This insight heightens our political awareness of inequality where

some people and thereby some identities are included and others excluded. The cultural capital that the educational system rewards and acknowledges may well differ from that which is valued in other communities.

The picture may be further complicated because the value that a person or child places on this cultural capital may depend upon a number of factors: most importantly their identification with it. Although a child may have a knowledge of western values and beliefs s/he may choose to draw upon alternative sources of knowledge and become conscious that this knowledge is not acceptable or respected in school contexts and circumstances. Therefore the value of certain knowledge will depend upon both one's own and others' recognition and respect for this knowledge. Bearing in mind this interactive dimension that creates and recreates cultural knowledge and identity Bourdieu's understanding of cultural capital offers a useful perspective within the educational arena.

Another aspect that Bourdieu pursues in relation to his insight into the unequal position of "other" cultural capital within the school context is his identification of the existence of symbolic violence or symbolic power. He explains how the elite in various ways, in this instance through the educational system, use language; arbitrary knowledge and symbols in a systematic way that makes these particular tools appear absolute and definitive. These tools are legitimised and their symbolic power remains invisible. This systematic assertion of particular, select symbols and knowledge devalues and undermines other people's/group's symbols and beliefs to the extent that these other people unconsciously perceive themselves and their values and beliefs to be inferior. Thompson (1992) in an introduction to Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power explains that various institutions in society have mechanisms through which different products are allocated different values: "The educational system

provides a good example of this process: the development of this system involves a certain kind of objectification in which formally defined credentials or qualifications become a mechanism for creating and sustaining inequalities, in such a way that recourse to overt force is unnecessary." (1992:31). The exclusion of local/particular identities, can result in people denying their own beliefs and customs to gain position, recognition and influence in society.

Bourdieu (1992) explains that this power is dependent upon being accepted as a power: " To understand the nature of symbolic power, it is therefore crucial to see that it presupposes a kind of *active complicity* on the part of those subjected to it...symbolic power requires, as a condition of its success, that those subjected to it believe in the legitimacy of power and the legitimacy of those who wield it." (p. 23 emphasis in the original). Domination may be difficult for the dominated to comprehend as, Bourdieu argues that this power is seen as arbitrary not conscious: "Symbolic power ...[is] almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization – it is a power that can be exercised only if it is *recognised*, that is misrecognised as arbitrary...Symbolic power, a subordinate power, is a transformed, i.e. misrecognizable, transfigured and legitimated form of other forms of power...capable of producing real effects without any apparent expenditure of energy." (p. 170 emphasise in the original).

However there are examples of resistance to the symbolic power identified by Bourdieu. Blackledge (2000) examines one such instance. He provides a good example of a community's effort to maintain their own cultural identity despite the symbolic power in the school. Studying the construction of literacy in the school system and its power relations with a Bangladeshi community he shows that the Bangladeshi community attempts to maintain its

own values and beliefs by separating itself from the educational system's priorities and attempting to readdress the power imbalance: "Literacy is a socioculturally constructed activity which varies because of different configurations that take in different social and cultural settings...Contributory factors to some minority groups' underachievement ...appear to result in the internalisation by minority groups of a sense of ambivalence with regard to their cultural identity and sense of powerlessness in relation to the dominant group...it became clear that [Bangladeshis]...were not actively valued by the school. That is, the mothers were regarded as 'illiterate' because their particular literacies did not fit with the school...the parent is rendered *voiceless* by the school's failure to provide either bilingual teachers or trained interpreters...this micro-interaction in the school setting mirrors the experience of many minority groups in the macro-interactions with dominant-culture institutions in society... the minority group ...wishing to self guard its language and culture, and fearing assimilation, turns in on itself and rejects the form of education imposed by the majority group."(pp. 55-67 my emphasis).

Other literature reveals that some South Asian young people encounter teachers' and schools' ignorance of their beliefs and values and this is compounded by a monocultural curriculum. Parker-Jenkins (1995) writes for example: "British state schools and educational policy is seen as inconsistent with their [Muslims'] way of life. Sarwar (1983) has highlighted the importance of cultural identity for Muslims and the fear that their community is threatened by the undermining of cultural consciousness...Muslim parents aspire to keep their children faithful in the face of perceived Western imperialism and permissiveness"(p.13). The curriculum reinforces a disparity between what South Asian children learn at school and what they have already learnt at home. The history of the British educational system suggests a predominantly ethnocentric approach to education (Tomlinson, 1990; Rattansi, 1992; Troyna,

1986; Short and Carrington, 1996, Gillborn, 1998), and Qureshi and Khan (1989) argue that the secular has survived at the expense of the sacred. The "National" Curriculum identifies what should be knowledge for the nation, whatever locality, and prescribes what and when to study certain subjects. It clearly focuses upon the technicalities of language and learning that can be assessed through a series of tests and leaves less space for reflection and debate. Thus cultural awareness becomes an awareness of "British" concerns with an emphasis on neutrality or technicality and less upon diversity, complexity and difference. However, difference is inevitable within the population of an inner city, mixed race population.

Bourdieu provides an important foundation for analysis of the home/school situation by revealing the tensions and imbalances of power in the relationship. However he does not explore the diverse and complex ways in which parents and homes live out their social and cultural existence and therefore his ideas can be used in only a limited way to explore the situation for South Asian communities in their relationship with school: his analysis is of the educational establishment and links to school – based concerns and not of different communities. Furthermore, it is important to note that translations can sometimes confuse possible meanings: the word " amplified" used in the earlier reference to Bourdieu (1979) suggests a quantitative rather than qualitative difference between home and school where, the research undertaken for this thesis has identified the importance of qualitative difference. The issue of cultural and linguistic differences needs to be registered when a French theorist is being used to analyse a British system of education. However, his ideas can be applied to critique the wider field of the educational establishment including policy, curriculum and teaching training recommendations where dominant ideology is enshrined and legitimised.

3.2. The educational establishment

This section will consider educational policies, the National Curriculum, teacher recruitment and training and teacher expectations. Much has been written about the tensions between schools and ethnic minorities but often the focus is on the unsuitability of school/educational approaches. This literature while being relevant to the original research question relating to constructs of success became less relevant in trying to understand the values of different South Asian communities. An investigation of educational policy can be seen as an extension to Bourdieu's analysis of the educational arena in clarifying valued knowledge within UK society. Institutional racism and racial inequality is identified at several levels from relationships with Black parents to teacher training and recruitment to the curriculum, and to educational policy. However, at the levels of implementation there are also variations relating to teacher training and prejudice.

3.2.1. Educational policies

Various sociologists and educationalists have criticised the inherent prejudice and ideological as well as pragmatic limitations of the National Curriculum, policy, implementation and practice. Ball (1990) in his analysis of policy-making argues that under the guise of Liberalism and Free Market ideology the Government can hide and therefore dismiss any responsibility for the inequality that exists. It can claim to adhere to a neutral stance in the Free Market. He suggests that social policy analysis should aim to unmask the political violence in institutions that appear neutral and independent.

Duncan Graham (1993) who was given the crucial role of overseeing the 1988 Educational Reform Act (ERA) stated that those who conceived of or inspired and agitated for the Act did not necessarily have much control over the outcomes. He describes how ERA was ultimately

a wilful distortion of educational ideology for political ends. The 1980's Thatcher government focused on the need to re-establish a British identity (Short and Carrington, 1996). The idea of a homogenous culture can imply that immigrants and other cultural groups are part of an alien culture. This developed emphasis on national traditions and "culture restorationism" can lead to social inequality for ethnic minorities in the way in which Bourdieu suggests in his analysis of the cultural capital. Hardy and Vieler-Porter (1992) in their contributions to an evaluation of the 1988 ERA explain how the ideological background to this Act perpetuates constructs of " Englishness," and how private ownership depolicises, individualises and pathologises disadvantages. These constructs suggest that ethnic minorities threaten a "British" culture. A focus on a monoculture can thus reinforce the institutionalisation of racism. Gillborn (1997) joint author with Mirza, of the 2000 Ofsted report on educational inequality, argues that restructuring schools and laying emphasis on a common British culture undercuts the impact of ethnic minority inequality and that as a consequence there is not enough ethnic monitoring. There is also literature that identifies institutional racism in the educational system. For instance, Crooks (1997) registers that educational professionals still see Black parents as a problem and notes that in general there is a "significant absence of Black parents at school." (p.58).

Institutional racism is apparent in policies for local educational authorities (LEAs) as well as ERA. The more recent cuts in funding to section 11 funding (see Ghouri, 1999) which has lessened LEA responsibility for ethnic minorities is rationalised as liberating the schools to make their own decisions. However schools are already overburdened with economic decisions and a lack of expertise in certain areas, and are less likely to allocate funds for selective use (Hardy and Vieler-Porter, 1993). Gillborn, (2003) argues that the recent government educational grant of £155 million to schools to improve ethnic minority

educational performance is high risk because schools are still institutionally racist, maintaining low expectations of their black pupils (Schopen, 2003). Davey (2003) an English teacher considers that schools tend to operate as islands and that a range of strategies including reaching out to parents is essential to remedy the situation. She writes: "Solutions need to come from outside the classroom as well as from within it."

Literature that focuses on the position of South Asian communities indicates there are fundamental problems underlying schools' relationships with these communities. Bhatti (1999) in her ethnographic study of a South Asian community notes the lack of engagement: "None of the teachers I spoke to spontaneously mentioned having seen Asian parents at school. Without extensive fieldwork ...there is no way in which this aspect of home-school interaction would have surfaced. The usual comment...was simply that Asian parents did not come to school very often" (p. 91). Sushma Rani Puri (1997) considers the communication problems and issues that arise, especially when English is a second language. She states that: "Home-school relations in multicultural settings are always problematic"(p. 36). Ahmed, Oxley McCann and Plackett (1997) report on a project that centres on trying to make connections between Asian communities and schools in the North of England where there have been identified difficulties. Karran, (1997) also registers the sense of isolation that Bangladeshi and Pakistani parents can experience within the inner cities. Vincent (2001) reinforces the concern about isolation and includes distance, and negative stereotyping as issues for South Asian communities in their relationship with school. Parker- Jenkins (1995) further suggests that the wider British society fails to acknowledge the positive strengths of minority cultures and beliefs. She argues that ethnic minorities are profoundly affected by a sense of exclusion at both a psychological and sociological level, and that this sense of exclusion has direct consequences for their sense of self esteem and identity: " Society as a

whole needs to move away from a utopian ideal of total assimilation towards a more pragmatic realism ...until this is recognized by adults, children will have to struggle on alone to negotiate an acceptable position at home and school. If, however, society does make such a move, children of Islam and from other ethnic minority groups will at last have a parity of esteem that is essential in the formulation of their status and identity in the British society" (Parker-Jenkins: 1995: 137).

There are then several ways in which educational policy can be seen to maintain inequalities, failing to monitor or address issues of institutional racism and failing to integrate different important cultural insights and concerns for parents that exist outside school in the communities.

3.2.2. The National Curriculum

Another way in which racial inequality is maintained is through the edicts of the National Curriculum. The National Curriculum enshrines the cultural capital of the dominant elite and has been criticised as over-centralised and over-prescriptive. Alexander (2000) describes the development and focus of the National Curriculum emphasising the growing centralisation of power: " The 1988 Reform Act laid down requirements for curriculum and assessment ...which greatly reduced the power of the local education authorities. Control of the curriculum passed to agencies directly accountable to, and appointed by, central government: ...with the curriculum under firm control, the government strengthened its leverage first through teacher training, then through inspection... OFSTED was established as a non-ministerial government department whose remit was tied closely to the implementation and validation of government policy. England thus lost its independent inspectorate"(pp. 141-2). Alexander's interpretation of events thus parallels Bourdieu's view of a "specific logic of

schooling" and sanctions which consecrate social inequality. It produces social inequality for those who do not "fit in".

The National Curriculum can be identified as a form of symbolic violence. It promotes values that may not be important for some communities and this inevitably affects teachers and minority pupils in the process. Its hegemony may influence the lack of communication between certain communities and school. Herman Ouseley, former chairman of CRE (Commission for Racial Equality), is quoted as saying that: "It would be helpful if schools provided a curriculum which taught an appreciation of different races" (Spencer, 2001). Within schools in the UK the National Curriculum can be seen as devalorising other cultures and identities by ignoring the importance of minority languages and cultures and thereby reinforcing a nationalist identity (Duijuzings, 2000).

However, as noted earlier Luthra (1997) suggests it is not only the content of the curriculum that limits understanding and knowledge of other cultures, there is also a need to encourage children to develop the intellectual tools to deal with the complexity of a multiracial society. Victoria de Rijke and Rebecca Sinter (1996) argue that teaching from one consensus of meaning further inhibits an awareness of different perspectives and that having to follow a strict curriculum content negates the role of questioning at all. Kearney (1996) evaluating the redrafting of the National Curriculum identifies how certain languages receive more attention than others. He notes that the primacy of Standard English was reasserted and the amount of space for bilingual issues relegated to two sentences. Although Welsh has been fully recognised as a second language, all the other community languages have not received much attention and are not part of the assessment programme at primary level. Without

comparisons provided by alternatives, different perspectives cannot be questioned in the way that Rijike and Sinter recommend.

However, more recently there are some indications that the curriculum has been adapted to allow the local needs of the school to surface. Schools are invited to " arrive at a framework for the curriculum which reflects their own individual needs [and to] respond to national and local priorities." (SCAA:1995:5). The ethnocentric content of the National Curriculum does still though compound the situation for young South Asians. Smart (1997) in his study of South Asian communities alerts us to this problem, and argues that, although Ofsted mentions the importance of cultural diversity and the richness of cultures, there is limited evidence of the inclusion of other cultural priorities and issues within the curriculum. He writes: " There is a long way to go before we can say that our curriculum is fully relevant to the needs of a multiethnic society ...we need a very wide definition of achievement." (p.25). The development of "inclusion" sections in the curriculum does appear to be an attempt to acknowledge diversity. However, some theorists (for example, Gillborn and Youdell, 2000), see the policy of inclusion as not addressing the fundamental inequalities. They argue that although resources are made available in certain areas of need i.e. in Education Action Zones (EAZ) and certain cities are receiving extra financial awards e.g. the Excellence in Cities (EIC) policies, amongst others, the emphasis on raising academic achievement which underlies the rationale for these awards does not acknowledge the social inequalities for certain groups within these areas: poor achievers from the middle classes benefit as much as those who are more disadvantaged in terms of ethnicity and economics. In fact it is possible to argue that the middle classes benefit the most from inclusive policies because these are undifferentiated. Therefore, despite these attempts to reach the needs of more disadvantaged groups in the society and to incorporate a wider range of values and beliefs the

implementation of policies still conspires to disadvantage those who are already disadvantaged.

Issues abound about what, how and when to test children. Murphy and Broadfoot (1995) in their analysis of effective assessment consider that National Curriculum Test assessment has the potential to become a crude misleading measurement. Wynne et al (1994) consider that APU (Assessment of Performance Unit) or attitude tests could be preferable in creating a picture of how children are responding to the National Curriculum Tests. They argue that this information would obviate the excessive time-consuming complications of National Curriculum Tests that ignore contextual factors that can negatively affect results. APU was particularly useful in analysing underachievement and problems that ethnic minorities face. It takes into consideration, gender, in-depth performance in terms of the context and content as well as attitudes. More recently there has been concern about how to include contextual factors in the analysis of results, for instance, the fact that background in terms of socio-economic factors may well influence the results. At present the criteria have focused on identifying those families that are eligible for free school meals. However, there is a need for funding, time and commitment to monitor the statistics in a way that truly does justice to such contextual factors. Nonetheless, despite this analysis and recognition of context there is a lack of insight into the impact that a different cultural outlook and experience may have on educational achievement. This dynamic dimension appears also not to have been analysed before in terms of its complexity. Murphy and Broadfoot's (1995) and Wynne's (1994) critiques of National Curriculum can only be considered when combined with more in-depth understanding of the complexity of the socio-cultural factors that affect South Asian communities.

As well as the cultural content in the National Curriculum being inappropriate, a focus on academic attainment alone, as noted above, may also reinforce social inequalities. A focus upon standardised testing, which claims to be impartial and yet is very selective in terms of what it chooses to assess inhibits individual schools from developing their own assessment systems that may be more sensitive to the strengths, weaknesses and cultural knowledge of their individual communities. Research into western cultural bias in assessment reveals how devastating it can be to perceptions of intelligence of other cultures. "Many Aborigines failed to be assessed as intelligent due to their lack of contact with white Piagetian concepts of conservation and perception."(Gool, 1997:115). Ethnic minority parents and children may well have skills and knowledge that remain undetected and undervalued within the present educational system. Furthermore their interpretations of learning may not concur with those existing in schools. As a consequence South Asian parents may well feel a sense of dislocation from the ethnocentric focus of the curriculum and feel unable to make positive contributions to their children's school work or help prepare them for the National Curriculum tests.

The implementation stage to policies further complicates the situation. Teachers are responsible for the interpreting the National Curriculum and disseminating it in the classroom and they also have their own agendas and experience.

3.2.3. Teacher recruitment and training

Teacher recruitment and training is another area where there may be practices that are not helpful in overcoming the home/school divide. Blackledge (1998) in his article on the institutional inequality of teacher training considers how teacher training in English for the National Curriculum ignores the social process of literacy and thereby promotes a curriculum

that can reinforce an ethnocentric view by the teachers. Furthermore, teacher-training programmes have at times been criticised for being too insensitive to the existence of racism and cross-cultural concerns (see Millett 1998). This insensitivity and lack of awareness of cross-cultural concerns could be addressed by recruiting more ethnic minority teachers. Ghouri (1998) quotes government researchers, concerned about the lack of recruitment of Black teachers, who accuse teacher trainers of being "colour-blind". Jones, Maguire and Watson (1997) came to understand that the reason why ethnic minorities avoided teaching as a profession was not only that it had a low status but that are poor chances for promotion for Black teachers It is not surprising then that Spencer (2000) reports that there is still a real shortage of ethnic minority teachers and that those in the system are still only expected to work in inner city areas.

3.2.4. Teacher expectations

Teachers' expectations also play a part in the home/school divide. Grant and Brooks' (1998) research provides evidence to suggest that government legislation is not dealing with inherent prejudice towards black children in the British educational system. They consider that the problem of conflictual relationships between teachers and black students needs to be addressed. They also recommend that parental involvement is central to the development of more positive relationships between teachers and their Black pupils. However, Jones, Maguire and Watson (1996) in their study of ethnic minority P.G.C.E. students on placement point to evidence that teachers can have racist attitudes e.g. In one school certain members of staff appeared to think that all ethnic minority groups require ESL (English as a second language).

Although Black teachers may have a greater insight into the situations that arise for pupils and parents, this insight may place them under considerable pressure, Jones, Maguire and Watson (1996) discovered that the ethnic minority P.G.C.E. students as well as some ethnic minority teachers felt that they carried an extra responsibility for their work in terms of dealing with issues of racism and inequality. They also realised that they provided vital role models for ethnic minority pupils in school.

The "self fulfilling prophesy" (Rosental and Jacobson 1968) suggests that teachers' expectations of their pupils' intellectual abilities may include discrimination and undervaluing of certain pupils. Salmon (1995) studying teachers' behaviour in the classroom suggests that: " Teachers, as themselves members of socio-cultural groups, bring to the classrooms their own particular meanings, their values, assumptions and taken for granted realities"(p.8). Teacher expectations are invariably seen to have powerful effects upon a child's real chances. Some teachers are known to hold very low expectations of children from low economic backgrounds (Tizard,1988). Various researchers (Ghouri, 1998; Gillborn, 1997; Grant and Brookes, 1998; Sollis, 1996) have provided evidence that African-Caribbean and Bangladeshi students suffer at the other end of teachers' negative expectations of their chances of success. Olemdo (1997) discovered that White teachers could have different expectations of different ethnic groups because they have preconceived ideas about their cultures. For instance one teacher in a US context saw Latino students as more likely to have structured and traditional family values than African - American. As a consequence a Hispanic boy who behaved disruptively could be seen as "restless" or "energetic" while an African-American with the same behaviour seen as being "bad". Furthermore, Olemdo found that many student teachers felt unprepared for working with pupils from diverse ethnic backgrounds. These studies are useful because they distinguish between ethnic groups and

yet they still illustrate how teachers may stereotype all these ethnic minority groups as a whole. Institutional racism is compounded by a lack of role models who could offer ethnic minority communities and pupils a more positive identification within the school system.

An example of how stereotyping can inhibit insight in a South Asian context is Huss-Keeler's (1997) study of teachers' perception of Pakistani parental involvement in their children's education. Huss-Keeler discovered that the teachers she interviewed could misinterpret the ethnic minority parents' involvement in schools as "not-interested". In fact her study revealed that these parents were often very interested, but that they involved themselves in ways that the teachers were insensitive to or unaware of. Crozier (2000) points to a similar lack of appreciation of working class parents' support by teachers. Similarly, Dhasmana (1994) in a study of Asian parents in two inner-city schools in Bristol looks at the problems of parents misunderstanding school practices. Her research provides evidence that Asian parents have skills and great respect for education, but that these resources are not able to flourish because both parents and the school are unaware of the contributions that they could make to the school system. She explains that some Asian parents do not understand how art and creativity can be seen as important as the 3 R's. These parents perceive the educational system as a major means of acquiring a job, security, status and social mobility in this country. Their emphasis is on respect to Elders and not on western values of freedom. Dhasmana sees the fundamental problem as being a lack of communication between these parents and the schools. She suggests that there is a need for a greater integration of the parents with the schools to encourage an exchange and to exploit the wealth of resources, which both cultures have the potential to provide. This study then provides useful insights.

3.2.4.1.Demands upon teachers

As well as recognising negative attitudes from teachers there is a need to understand the complexity of teachers' work. This dimension is well charted by Hargreaves (1984) and Cortazzi (1996) amongst others who draw attention to the complex processes by which the teacher must translate documented prescriptions into various socially complex classroom situations. This demands sensitivity to context as well as a range of organisational skills. Alexander (1995) in writing about versions of primary education identifies the issues that a teacher faces, which involve decisions about curriculum material, how it is presented, assessed and what methods to apply. The teacher's ideas, values and beliefs underlie these decisions. Thus structural constraints and particular school contexts may well compound the complex considerations that teachers have to make.

Lack of communication with parents may be because the teacher is caught between the demands of the National Curriculum and those of her pupils and has problems resolving these tensions. Blaming teachers for a lack of communication may not take into consideration the teachers' position. The teacher may be so busy dealing with the National Curriculum that s/he does not have time to address the problems that her minority pupils encounter and there may be a danger of including superficial picture of "differences" without recognition of the complexity of minority communities' responses. There is also a lack of knowledge of how different cultural groups experience schools when they attempt to engage with them (Crozier, 1999). Teachers who are not aware of the cultural complexity of ethnic minority pupils' experiences may well be unaware or unable to address this important discrepancy.

So far we have identified underlying tensions between statutory regulations and policies prescribed in schools, the complexities of implementation, the needs of those who are not

emphasise the inequality in the situation. To understand the clash and incoherence both within the educational system and between schools and South Asian communities it has been necessary also to examine the socio-political and historical forum in which they all reside. Roaf and Bines (1989) in their work on issues concerning special education recognise that racial inequality has operated for many years and that despite debates about multicultural education and racism these subjects have not yet been properly addressed. This section has identified the various ways in which the educational system can disadvantage Black communities both directly through institutional racism and indirectly by maintaining symbolic power in the system and producing a clear hierarchy in terms of cultural capital. However, the complexity of the implementation stage where teachers' lack of knowledge, disposition and perspectives may further disadvantage ethnic minority communities has also been acknowledged. The potential link across the home/school divide provided by teachers may in this way be limited.

There is also literature that specifically deals with the home/school and it is to this literature we turn in the next section in order to understand the complexity of the situation in greater depth, particularly focusing on the different cultural capital in the home.

3.3. The parent/school level

Bastiani (1997) states that: "Parents are a child's first and most important educators; families are simply the biggest influence upon children's attitudes, behaviour and achievement."(p.8). Dislocation between school and home has already been identified on several levels; cultural capital, the National Curriculum, attitudes relating to a colonised past, differing power relations. In the context of the home/school divide a "different" perspective becomes an obstacle to the orchestration of its particular vision; the "juggernaut of educational policies",

(Crozier:2000: ix) flattens other vehicles standing in its way. Vincent (1992), Reay (1996), Allred, David and Edwards (2001) and Crozier (2000) specifically draw attention to the different cultural capital and unequal position that the non-middle-class- white-adult-male British holds in the educational arena. Reay (1996) draws our attention to the gender bias in the concept of home-school relationships by which the emotional capital that mothers in general provide is not acknowledged. Crozier notes the "invisible" position of the working class within the educational arena. She identifies a dissonance in the system because through the process of "normalisation" the educational system ignores and undermines other different perspectives including those of the white working class and of the young persons.

Although Lareau (1989) focuses upon the situation for the working class she extracts some useful ideas from Bourdieu's theory that could also be applied to the situation for South Asian communities. She reveals how the school system draws more upon the social and cultural resources of middle class families than working class. In the sense that the working class represents a contrasting set of values to the school this dynamic can be aligned to any other contrasting set of values such as that of the South Asian communities. With reference to these working class families Lareau identifies the lack of confidence, knowledge and understanding that they may have of the school. These factors inhibit parents from interacting with the school in a way that it expects them to i.e. in a way that the school considers to be "proper". Lareau draws attention to the arbitrariness of what is valued as cultural capital at any one time and yet how dominant institutions unevenly draw upon only certain cultural capital and perpetuate an ignorance of the potential in others. Thus valuable alternative and "different" cultural resources are not activated or invested in by certain players in the educational system as we have noted earlier. Vincent (1992) draws upon Foucault and Gramsci to explain the political means by which the educational system exercises power and

control over the working classes and ethnic minorities. There is then a process by which alternative voices are submerged, marginalised and disguised as part of cultural pluralism but in reality only one set of values and beliefs is represented in educational policies; the rest remain invisible. Vincent (1992) notes how parents often feel excluded from the school as well as a nuisance; they can also feel unhappy that their children may sometimes take more notice of their teachers. She argues that, despite legislation that claims to enhance parental control, in practice micropolitical processes maintain institutional power and inhibit parents from developing an independent voice.

Important cultural discontinuities in the field of literacy between various home practices and beliefs and those of the school are well illustrated in Brice-Heath's (1982) study of three communities and school described in her article, "*What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school.*" Brice-Heath describes how Black working-class children in one community arrive at school without any knowledge of the technicalities of reading and writing. However as the upbringing in their communities offers them a rich experience of story telling and narrative skills if they manage to grasp these technical skills they can become skilful writers later in the school. This is in contrast to the more didactic reading practices at home in the White middle –class communities where literacy practices echo those found in school. Brice-Heath differentiates between the home and school cultures and demonstrates the consequent strains and repercussions for children in transition between home and school. She reveals discrimination towards both class and race in the school curriculum and pedagogic practices. Her examples provides powerful insight into the various ways in which homes have different cultural practices and in the process her ideas endorse Bourdieu's political awareness of cultural bias in the educational system.

Tomlinson (1993) in the context of studying ethnic minority parents' relationship with schools discovered that the mismatch between ethnic minority values and those of the school could result in an ignorance of ethnic minority parents' experiences. She notes how ethnic minority parents can feel intimidated when they enter the school, unlike the experience for example of when they visit their own community centres that they identify with. Cuckle, (1996) describes the cultural barriers between the school culture and home culture that can also reinforce the difficulties which parents may face. Parents with different cultural capital from that promoted in schools e.g. working class or ethnic minority parents may well feel ill equipped to voice their feelings and to integrate into the school processes. However, whether parents are from middle class or working class backgrounds Hughes, Wikeley and Nash (1994) register that parents have historically been perceived as "problems" within the school system, which is contradictory to the concept of partnership promoted as ideal in educational literature. This perception has culminated in teachers' assumptions about parents' beliefs and values that actually have limited substance. It may be the case that parents are inhibited by their own lack of confidence and that teachers, who may be unaware of the constraints that parents face, offer parents unsuitable advice.

Another contributory factor to the home/school divide, which may make communication difficult, is the range of problems that may beset parents. Reay (1996) describes how working class mothers are besieged by numerous problems that undercut their ability to give their children what they want for them. For instance, the sheer pressure of long working hours, compounded by limited resources with which to finance buying books and taking children to schools at a distance places far more pressures upon working class mothers, or the unemployed (see also Crozier, 1999). She illustrates how single parents and Black parents suffer even greater problems. The latter are also aware of the issues related to racial prejudice

and the potential bullying of children who observe non-western practices (e.g. who wear particular head scarves). Parents may then have to embark on a complex information-gathering exercise about which schools are safe for their children. Ultimately Reay identifies how there are much higher psychological and emotional risks for working class mothers who decide to invest in the academic welfare of their child.

The situation that families experience is not just perceptual but also circumstantial. South Asian communities in the UK are often located in poor inner city areas. Patel (1997) studying Bengali communities and refugees notes that the terrible housing conditions, low educational achievement, high unemployment and racist attacks interact to undermine self-esteem and identity. Bhatti (1999) in her study of South Asian pupils draws attention to the materially impoverished existence of a predominately Muslim Pakistani and Bangladeshi working class community in the South of England which she studied. She identifies the strains and stresses that the parents can experience, as they are often illiterate and heavily indebted to their poor relatives abroad. She also emphasises the problems of racism and stereotyping that prejudice this community on both a perceptual and material level, for instance many parents are either on a low wage or unemployed as well as "Black".

Vincent (1992) reminds us of the fundamental ideological inequalities that exist in the wider society and how these percolate down to affect both working classes and ethnic minorities. Vincent argues that the way in which the educational establishment prevents challenges to its cultural and economic hegemony is through a focus upon individuality rather than collectivity: parents are expected to act as individuals and not as collective groups when they visit the school, which is something that middle class parents may feel more able to do. She also describes the ways in which other voices and perspectives are excluded from policy and

practice in school and argues that recent literature on the school/ home link ignores the difficulties and conflict inherent in such possible engagements: " The reliance on consensual language, such as 'partnership', 'dialogue', 'involvement', 'sharing', which feature strongly in the home-school literature, ...[edits] tension and conflict out of the relationship"(p.187). Alldred, David and Edwards (2001) in the context of studying the home/school relationship draw upon the concept of individualisation to explain how the educational system acting as a component of the market system augments power to individuals who are invited to "choose" for themselves what they want for their children. However this choice is realistically only available to the middle classes and brings with it expectations of taking responsibility and acting to support the school system. Therefore, through this process of individualisation the effectiveness of collective decision-making processes that may operate in communities outside the school is undermined.

Alldred, David and Edwards (2001) develop an awareness of dissonance and disparity between home and school through the concept of "familialisation", which is an attempt to institutionalise the family blurring the boundaries between the private and public spheres in life. Slater (2000) also identifies the tensions that exist between parents' and teachers' rights, as the question of who is responsible for pastoral or academic care becomes more and more blurred. The recent development of "citizenship" within the curriculum is an instance of attempts to develop a sense of social responsibility within the curriculum. At the same time the educational establishment demands that parents collude with it to act as monitors and administrators in their own homes through communications to parents, such as asking parents to sign homework diaries. This may only increase misunderstanding.

The situation for South Asian communities is by no means simple or easy to address. These communities house a diversity of beliefs, practices, histories and experiences that are developing in different ways in response to the wider social climate. Vincent helpfully points to such diversity: "Closer analysis of home-school relations may reveal differences and divisions between different social groups ...Understanding this situation is vital if simplistic strategies are to be avoided" (2001: 200).

Within this critique of the home/school relationship there are some other attempts to show diversity within groups: Lareau (1989) acknowledging the importance of working class culture, Reay (1996) and Crozier (2000) demonstrating the existence of diversity, Reay emphasising the particular demands on mothers and Brice-Heath (1982) describing the complex ways in which different home cultures affect a child's progress in literacy. These studies imply that other studies of the home/school relationship e.g. Hughes, Wikeley and Nash (1994) are in danger of oversimplifying the home/school divide and in the process producing homogenous view of homes which undermine the important cultural, gender and class differences that in different ways affect a child's chances in the educational system, which the school to a lesser or greater degree ignores. The home/school relationship needs to be unpacked in terms of the socialising differences in general between homes and schools and also in terms of position of both parties in the home/school relationship. Only then is it possible to clarify how this very specific relationship between Black parents and school is inhibited. In addition to identifying the socio-political disadvantages that parents face it is important to clarify what differences exist at a social psychological and cultural level: the difference between primary and secondary socialisation.

3.4. The move from home to school.

In general there are differences between primary (home) and secondary (school) socialisation. Rogoff (1990) in her overview of learning describes the complex skills that parents can provide for the essential social and cognitive development that children require to engage with educational institutions and the wider society. She draws upon Bruner's (1986) concepts of scaffolding and Gibson's (1983) ecological theory that emphasise active interaction with the environment to enhance development of memory, perception and cognition. She refers to Newman's metaphor for Piaget's concept of equilibration that extends to the social context: "Foods that are made available to children are carefully selected, processed and prepared for children by their parents and by their culture. Just as parents prepare food for children, so, too, parents (and others in the child's environment) prepare and constrain the type of intellectual experiences to which the child will be exposed. ...It is in these ways and in terms of these cultural practices that all reality can be said to be a social reality."(1990:149 – 150). Rogoff usefully describes the skills accrued at home and also registers the way in which linguistic development helps to extend the child's understanding of a wider social and cultural world though she does not emphasise the possible clash between the methods and context of teaching and learning at home and those in schools.

Harkness and Super (1995) however do differentiate between the implicit rules of socialisation processes in a family and the formal processes within schools namely within a US context with the child being expected somehow to synthesise the possible discrepancies between the two. Dunn (1993) unpacks some of these differences and clashes as she explores the particular features of home learning in more depth and implies that there is a considerable difference between home and school learning. She describes the social and emotional context of home where the child may also receive more individual attention than at school to assist

the process of learning. According to Dunn parents are acknowledged to contribute to children's development at four different levels: the practical, moral /abstract, conceptual and empirical. Her studies indicate that a substantial part of children's learning in home is mediated through and affected by social and emotional engagements.

The three studies mentioned above recognise the interactive and diverse combination of factors that combine in the learning process and that may differ considerably with the more formalised teaching, which occurs in school. In general education in school can be contrasted with the more individual, emotional, social and long-term context for learning that homes provide. However, these writers do not register the variability of different cultural agendas. Without an understanding of the diverse ways in which the processes of learning are integrated into different cultural frameworks these studies remain too generalised in terms of a South Asian context. It is possible that these clashes in themselves do not cause a problem for South Asian children but it may be the case that their identity, which is inextricably bound to certain beliefs and values, is challenged. It may be that the socio-cognitive and more middle-class skills espoused in school may be inappropriate within the social and cultural setting that children live and develop (see Meadows, 1993). These suggestions and critiques can only be considered when combined with more in-depth understanding of the complexity of the socio-cultural factors that affect any particular community: this in-depth understanding is one of the objectives of this thesis.

3.4.1 Socialisation and cultural clashes for South Asian communities

We have already seen that divergences between home and school cultures can create a gulf between the two (Brice-Heath, 1982; Dunn, 1993; Harkness and Super,1993; Dhasmana,1994 and Meadows,1993). Looking in particular at the differences between South Asian

communities' and western socialisation patterns can be particularly important. Rogoff (1990) describes how in non-western cultures children are more integrated into adult activities with clearer differences between the way adults talk to children and the way they talk among themselves. Children from these non-western cultures may be poorly prepared to deal with the discourse expected in schools and also their more observant rather than assertive approach to learning may be undermined: the school is likely to expect children to speak out and not just observe what is going on in the classroom. Alldred et al (2001) and Vincent (2001) alert us to the question of independence. The educational system includes negative attitudes to non-European forms of socialisation that may not subscribe to an emphasis on autonomy and independence. With direct reference to Asian families Suvannathat (1985) considers that focusing on independence in terms of learning theory and less on authority will shake the roots of Asian families. Edwards (1995) considers that the conception of a child as aiming to attain autonomy and separateness, typified by demanding and assertive toddlers, differs considerably from a view of the watchful and imitative child as respected in other cultures. Gregory's (1998) study comparing sibling behaviour across cultures i.e. Bangladeshi British and working – class Anglo British also indicates that there may be cultural differences in the way children are expected to learn. It is possible to consider that these differences may originate in the way children are taught at home or alternatively within community centres such as the Mosque. Gregory (1998) found evidence to suggest that at home a Bangladeshi group of siblings played "at" learning at school very accurately and seriously imitating the teacher/ pupil behaviour as well as content in the school lessons. By contrast a group of Anglo-British siblings played "with" learning at school copying the format but not the actual content with a lot more playing around with the situation rather than imitation. These socio-cultural studies are helpful in showing up the differences that South Asian pupils may well experience at the receiving end of the home/school divide. It is also

important to register that the family as the first institution to provide an identity for children can have a powerful influence.

Another central difference between school and South Asian communities that emerges from the literature is the importance of religious education. A particular aspect of this is the question of education within the Mosque. Children in Muslim communities have as it were an alternative school model in the educational activities that take place within the Mosque. One study is particularly important here. Gregory (1994) contrasts the western school-orientated paradigms on how to read with non-western, non-school orientated paradigms experienced by Bangladeshi pupils. Gregory identifies six different areas where there is a contrast. First she discovered that the reading practices upheld in school contrasted at every level with the non-western, non-school orientated paradigms of reading. She argues that reading in a western sense involves detachment from the text and therefore South Asian children, in this case Bangladeshis, have to change from a situation-dependent to a text-dependent approach. There is a contrast between the analytical and critical and to elaboration and mystery. Second she suggests that: "western secular and more mundane views of the literary world contrasts sharply with a quasi – religious significance given to reading in many Asian cultures" (p113). Third she describes how in the educative environment of the Mosque the reading of the Qu'ran is carried out as a large group activity and fourth she notes how tutoring in the Mosque is explicit and deliberate. Fifth she identifies how in particular children in the Mosque have a different expectation of participation as they understand that in a Bengali class they have to work, read and write, and there is a high standard of discipline. This contrasts with the freedom of choice that occurs in the school classroom where there can be more relaxed forms of expression. Gregory suggests that different expectations of interaction and sharing i.e. western educational psychology's emphasis on a "joint" enterprise between

the teacher and pupils (see Dunn, 1989; Bruner, 1987) may result in teachers inadvertently excluding children who do not share and participate. Sixth she notes that the English teacher in the school emphasises the difficulties and potential learning failures of her children. By contrast the Bengali teacher stresses the importance of the child as a learner and has no doubt of success. In conclusion Gregory refers to Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and proposes that schools need to question their cultural assumptions both in terms of what reading is and how it should be taught in school.

Bratt Paulston (1992) in a US context shows how differences in discourses may apply in general. She argues that children may fail to participate verbally in class because they are used to a different type of participation in their home community. Gregory's insights are very helpful in terms of contrasting the quite different expectations and curriculum within the Mosque and School. However, this is only one step, as she does not investigate the diversity within the Muslim communities and the psychological dimensions of identification with the Mosque. Furthermore, the South Asian communities comprise complex variations in culture and religious practices as seen earlier: the Mosque is only one instance of its non-western cultural practices.

There have been some attempts made to overcome the home/school divide (and perhaps in this way to prevent the current lack of communication) by founding Muslim and Sikh schools. Two useful studies describe the benefits of these: Parker Jenkins (1995) illustrates how Muslim schools acknowledge religious adherence so that the pupils within them are able to develop a sense of identity that may allow them to be both Muslim and British. She describes the importance of Islamic education for Muslim parents and also the way in which Islamic schools can be considered genuinely bicultural as they focus upon both the National

Curriculum and Islamic education. This was also the case in the new Sikh local authority school described by Klein whose head, Rajinder claims: " we don't teach from a Sikh perspective. We encourage pupils to be independent thinkers about their academic studies and their religion"(Klein, 2000: 10). This Sikh school has been granted local authority funding and appears to successfully combine the National Curriculum, impressive G.S.C.E. results and Sikh beliefs and values and dress. In these instances the teachers within these schools may be sufficiently sympathetic to the needs of their pupils and knowledgeable enough to address issues that ethnic minority parents are sometimes less able to.

Institutions and supplementary schools that work independently from the mainstream can represent a more radical and at the same time relevant resource for cultural minorities. McGregor (2002) interviewing, a trustee for the An-Nisa society, an organisation that tries to reconcile traditional Muslim communities with mainstream British society, writes: " The dissonance between home life and school life leaves Muslim children disorientated and ill at ease" (p4). Khan's An-Nisa society writes and publishes books for Muslim children that look at life from an Islamic perspective in a creative way. Supplementary education can provide cultural content appropriate for Black communities and an environment for pupils to identify with. Reay and Mirza (2001) reviewing African Caribbean Saturday and Sunday schools argue that: " Black supplementary schools, despite their quiet conformist exterior, contain elements that are both subversive and affirming, providing spaces of radical blackness." (p.92). Identities and cultures are varied and as a consequence supplementary education, unlike mainstream curriculum, is varied. There is a wide range of supplementary support available for different communities' requirements.

However, outside the arena of Sikh and Muslim schools there are very particular issues embedded in South Asian community values and beliefs that appear to directly challenge school practices. One example of this is parents saving up to send children back to their homelands to be educated (see Bhatti, 1999). The parents in Bhatti's study consider that despite long holidays and the disruption to their children's schooling, this visit is very positive and educational for their children; it reflects some South Asian parents' determination to enforce their children's cultural origins. There are also contrasts in terms of priorities or practice in families and not just attachment to them. In contrast to a sense of belonging to the family and sharing resources the educational system can be perceived by some groups as far too rationalist, arrogant and highly individualistic (Luthra,1997). Haleh (1989) suggests that recession and racial discrimination has meant that educated Asian women have voluntarily withdrawn from the labour market to take care of the family, which in turn has reinforced the Asian cultural focus on the family as the core of identity. Here then there may be a question of "family" values overruling educational priorities. An educational identity may be seen as less valuable in the way in which the South Asian social worker recognised in his diagram of South Asian priorities mentioned earlier.

It is vital to be reminded of the diversity that exists within and among community groups. There is a dangerous assumption that all Asian parents have the same outlook. The literature above does not emphasis this diversity (e.g. Dhasmana, 1994). Attitudes among South Asian families and communities towards the educational system can vary considerably. It is also important to recognise that each community offers its members beliefs and practices that are constantly developing and changing both internally and externally. Therefore to avoid reinforcing a static view of culture (see Street, 1991) it is essential not just to describe particular beliefs and practices but rather to endeavour to capture their dynamic elements.

There is then some acknowledgement of differences in socialisation but there is a still an absence of literature recognising diversity or recording materials and resources available. Furthermore, the constraints that South Asian parents experience still requires more in-depth assessment. As well as thinking about pressures on parents, which may contribute to the lack of communication between home and school, pupils also play a part in terms of their own development.

3.5. The child's level

As with literature on parental perspectives there is literature arguing the general case for hearing the child's or students' perspectives and/or positions. The experience of school may not necessarily work out favourably for the child if there is a great disparity between his or her own experiences and school life. A child can feel unmotivated and alienated and this can result in a sense of meaninglessness rather than a desire to be "successful" for the school. Sally Morgan writing her autobiography in Australia articulates the disappointment that learning at school can have. She writes: "She [the teacher] placed my book on my desk, and I couldn't help groaning out aloud. It seemed that Dick, Dora, Nip and Fluff had somehow managed to graduate to Grade Two. In a way, I felt sorry for them. None of them lived near a swamp, and there was no mention of wild birds, snakes or goannas. I resigned myself to another year of boredom"(1995: 23).

Donaldson (1978) in her work on children's thinking illustrates how important it is for adults to disembed, to interpret meanings in a manner that corresponds to the child's frame of experiences. She specifically redesigned Piaget's tests so that they made more "human sense", by offering children tasks that drew upon their own experiences and in this way

gained considerable cognitive achievements from them. Different pedagogic practices place different emphases on how to motivate a child. A focus on training and more didactic forms of learning may pay less attention to the child's perspective. Holt studying children in the classroom provides a useful view of effective teaching: "A child is most intelligent when the reality before him arouses in him [sic] a high degree of attention, interest, concentration, involvement - in short he cares about what he is doing" (Holt, 1996: 214). Salmon (1995) considers that the rhetoric of the National Curriculum may well be inappropriate in terms of the significance and relevance it holds for a child. She quotes Rich (1989): "When someone with the authority of a teacher describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing" (Salmon:1995: 55). Wertsch (1991:17) in his examination of social interaction also illustrates how in a "show and tell time" a child describes the importance of his object (a piece of lava) in terms of its relationship to his personal life history as well as personal characteristics i.e. that you have to be careful and responsible holding it and that his mother found it. By contrast the teacher uses: "explicit, standardised taxonomies, fixed once and for all in the form of 'dualistic typologies' noted by Bourdieu," which ignore the child's perspective and persuade him to think only through the teacher's mode (i.e. whether the rock is rough or smooth, heavy or light). Leont'ev's (1981) study of the concept of activity in Soviet Russia contrasts the teacher's focus with the child's "sense". The child's sense in Bourdieu's terminology is located in the: "practical schemes of classification and which are always partial and linked to practical contexts"(1981:67) and are the focus of the child's description.

Donaldson, Holt, Leont'ev and Wertsch thus all emphasise the potential misunderstandings that can occur between teachers and pupils because of the different cultural expressions that exist in the school and their personal world and which may be intensified with the demands

of a prescriptive National Curriculum. In addition the child may experience dissonance between home values and school values. Using a powerful metaphor for their chapter entitled "Minding the gap: children and young people negotiating relations between home and school", in a compilation of essays on: Children, Home and School, Allred and Edwards (2001) register young people's preference for a clear separation between home and school. However most of these studies do not consider the particular situation for children who come from a very contrasting cultural background. Here the discrepancy between teachers and pupils' cultural expressions could be all the more acute, and this may well be the experience for some South Asian children.

3.5.1. Issues for South Asian pupils

The school may not just patronise a child according to her/his academic aptitudes, as suggested earlier, but also according to different beliefs and practices. Children moving across cultures can develop different identities that must somehow coalesce. However if they clash this can create a sense of disequilibrium and alienation for the child. Smith (2000) in her novel about families in contemporary multiracial society describes the lack of identity that a Black pupil may discover reading Shakespeare in school. South Asian children and adults may well feel that both their South Asian identity and its meanings are derided and denied outside their communities. Identity is also related to what you are able to identify with; it is difficult to identify with things that deny or deride things that you value. Rutherford understands that: "In the hierarchical language of the west, what is alien represents otherness, the site of difference and the repository of our fears and anxieties" (p.10). Patel studying refugee and Bengali communities quotes Thomas, 1995: " For Black young people, growing up in a White society or arriving in a totally different country can lead to this confusion. The experience of racism erodes self esteem and confidence, and a young

person can internalise the racism, and believe they are inferior to white society." (162:1997). Bhatti (1999) articulates the pressures for South Asian youth living in the UK to disentangle and confront the disparities between their experience at home and school and move on and yet notes the communities' essentially self-protective and understandably defensive reactions to the challenges of living in the UK.

Here again it is important to be reminded of Allred, David and Edwards (2001) findings that certain young people may wish to have a clear separation between home and school. Young people's responses may not be the same as that of the older generations. The intra-group tensions noted by Kakar (1996) mentioned earlier can be further exacerbated by a lack of intellectual resources that the Muslim community in the UK may have. Parents may have little understanding of the kind of intellectual perspectives that their children have become aware of through the educational system. The parents' graphic illustrations of rural Punjab that, they may use as a means to enforce moralistic arguments, mean little to children who have not lived there. Luthra (1997) argues that although South Asian parents may be able to pass on folk culture to their children, their own lack of education in some cases does not help them to transmit these values within a rational framework. Lewis (1994) refers to Shabbir Akhtar, a Muslim scholar, who claims that the lack of intellectual sophistication, of proper education centres in the UK, of theoretical frameworks and only visits from the "ulema" from Pakistan (who is as unsophisticated as the village imams) means that the people are still isolated and that there is little intellectual development. This in turn enforces a limited, authoritarian teaching style expected by parents and is why young people can prefer to adopt the "bhangra"(a fusion of western and eastern) life style.

The parents' difference in attitude and knowledge can be compounded by the school's dismissal of the importance of other languages and cultures. The school's indifference to these cultural and linguistic skills can have a detrimental effect on South Asian pupils' self-identity. Gregory (1994) in her study of South Asian pupils discovered that there was a sharp difference in attitude and behaviour when children were engaged in their heritage language sessions. The children appeared more motivated though they claimed to prefer mainstream schoolwork. This dichotomy in which the children claimed to prefer mainstream schoolwork and yet in practice expressed more enthusiasm when they were engaged with their particular cultural languages and cultures maybe related to a general lack of awareness of South Asian identities by South Asians themselves (Gregory, 1994). In order to fit in and become accepted children may feel compelled to deny their own cultural knowledge and identity when they sense it does not appear to have any credibility in school. This problem may endorse South Asian parents' fears that their children could lose their connections with their South Asian identities and cultures when they attend schools.

An individual's sense of identity can be challenged or affirmed within different contexts. Thus children crossing cultural contexts e.g. between the school and home, may find their sense of self-identity and thus self-esteem threatened if the beliefs and values they attribute to their identity are dismissed or perceived as inferior. Identity is socially created and perceived (see Berger and Luckman, 1966 and Searle, 1995) and yet also personally felt and negotiated.

The British educational system embodies certain aspirations, values and beliefs, images, histories and procedures: " The way a school views and relates to its pupils' families and the communities they come from is a particularly critical part of its identity" Alexander (2000: 226). Children arrive in school with quite different identities and experiences; going to a

school can extend these identities or challenge them. Smith (2000) notes the detrimental effect that the educational system has imposed upon one of the white characters in her novel: "The British educational system having tripped him up with a snigger many years previously" (2000:14-15). The school itself confers an identity upon its pupils, which may or may not coincide with a personal identity.

The school identity comprises a number of elements but its overall pedagogy is influenced by the ideology of the National Curriculum as noted earlier. The National Curriculum ensures that only certain types of knowledge and skill are valued and realised. A curriculum that focuses upon the "British" culture inadvertently implies that other cultures, geographies, histories and literature are somehow less important; furthermore it may well ignore or fail to debate the elements of British history that are potentially both colonialist and elitist. The National Curriculum can be seen to have a "hidden agenda" where certain values and beliefs are assumed, yet under the guise of a neutral curriculum they remain undeclared. What is absent is as important as what is present. These priorities will have an effect on identity in terms of how closely a pupil can identify with the practices established at schools.

Identity can also relate to perceived "best ways" of learning, which are culturally bound. The ability to learn and receive knowledge can be related to the meaning school learning holds for a pupil: the way this learning develops and extends the knowledge that the children also acquire at home. If this meaning is assumed rather than negotiated then this at the same time denies the importance of the knowledge that certain pupils bring with them from their homes: it can appear to reject their knowledge. This rejection can then result in a loss of self-esteem.

At a profound level, young Asians at school can experience a crisis of identity when they realise that their own family and cultural beliefs and practices are not respected or acknowledged within the educational system. This can create a sense of self-doubt about their own culture and as a consequence a loss of self-esteem. Bhikhu Parekh (1982) considers that the second generation of South Asians confronts two problems: one of self-esteem and the other of a negotiation between their own and the British culture. He suggests that pupils' problem is not "who" they are but rather how they can "respect" who they are. It is not a problem of identity but rather of integrity. Amrit Wilson (1978) suggests that the problem is not a choice between two lifestyles (British or Asian) but rather how to keep one life style without rejecting the other. She quotes an Asian child, Meena from Acton: " I never regard myself as English. I am Indian in every way. It is just that I want to be free"(p.102). Here though it needs to be borne in mind that some attitudes will have changed since the 1970's. Brah (1985) for example considers the structural, cultural and racial problems that South Asian children experience when they attend school which demonstrate not rejection but some kind of uneasy compromise. He suggests in a study of schooling for Asian girls and problems of structural racism or cultural difference that: " Many youngsters feel the motivation to participate in the life and work of the school because it represents the dominant culture and is supported by the media and can lead to economic opportunities. The home, representing the subordinate culture, produces strong affective values and systems of personal support. For many minority children the strength of this primary socialisation at home coupled with the stresses of transition to school means that secondary socialisation of the school is only partly effective... the experience of the conflicting relationship between the two may inhibit the child's exploration of both"(p.123). Brah's considerations are important because they remind us of the interconnected and diverse aspects of a child's environment that can affect both learning and identity.

There are however, more recent studies that indicate despite the limitations raised above that there have been some positive changes at a personal and reflexive level. Rassool (1999) mentioned earlier, in her study of Asian and African pupils in an inner-city comprehensive school discovered that the pupils have developed sophisticated ways of adapting to the cross currents they face and have learnt to discriminate between different options available to them, to evolve flexible identities. She suggests that despite the challenges they face in school, for example racism, once questioned about their experiences they are able to work reflexively to reveal how they integrate themselves into British society. However she also suggests that the problems they face will arise after they have been at school: " systematic ones that, potentially may render them 'invisible', disillusioned and unfulfilled" (p.35) and argues that there is still a lack of positive and dynamic role models for these pupils both within schools and in the wider society.

3.6. Conclusion

It seems likely that educational systems fail to acknowledge both the psychological and sociological concerns that arise for South Asian communities located in the UK which affect their sense of identity. Minhas (1997) recognises that these South Asian cultural communities are affected by a diversity of structural constraints: "patterns of migration, class, religion, language skills, education, social status and position in the whole community"(p.189). Both social anthropological and psychological studies provide important insights into the relationship between these communities and school. However despite registering the disadvantages that South Asian pupils may experience, the structural inequality of the home/school relationship and some of the tensions that exist, there is no integrated picture. How all the actors and contexts interact is both complex and diverse. The literature does

suggest that responses are diverse, but the whole range of areas of policy-making and practice within schools and diverse responses from the community all need to be considered to understand the fuller picture of the home/school divide.

It is important to understand much more clearly the perspectives of different communities if dialogue with school is to be achieved. One example is raised by Kearney (1996) in criticising the lack of bilingual perspectives in the National Curriculum argues that there are deep unresolved issues of identity and culture to be addressed:" [There is a] need for more research to be conducted with community groups in the British context, to assess needs and aspirations and establish a meaningful dialogue"(p.248). The exploration of a group of South Asian communities linked to one school forms just such a basis in this research in order to explore these perspectives in more depth. The methodological considerations and data collection process, described in the following chapter, show how the research was designed to facilitate this discovery and what took place.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY, METHODS & DATA COLLECTION

In this section the researcher, being female has opted to use only the female pronouns, thus avoiding complex or clumsy configurations such as "her/himself."

4.0. Introduction

This chapter analyses the methodology and methods that underlie the ethnographic approach adopted. It clarifies how the research question: "Why is there a lack of communication between the South Asian communities and the school?" Is best answered using this approach, ensuring sensitivity to participants' concerns while at the same time attempting a rigorous process of enquiry within the limits of qualitative research.

The chapter is divided into three parts:

Part one explains the methodologies and rationale for the ethnographic approach adopted in the fieldwork: including ethical considerations.

Parts two and three, focus on the two stages of the research design; how this study was initially designed and then changed i.e. why this sample of parents, children, teachers and schools was chosen, and data collected in this way. It goes on to explain why and how instruments were used and chosen (e.g. interviews, participant observation) and how these decisions help to answer the research question. It also describes how the fieldwork was carried out on the Subcontinent and integrated into the general fieldwork findings. The research design is explained primarily in terms of the concerns of communities with some reference to school priorities and the researcher's own priorities. This chapter concludes with

the data collection process and issues that developed throughout the process as well as outlining insights relating to methods and methodology gained from the visit to the Subcontinent.

Part One: Methodologies

The ethnographic approach chosen for this study belongs to a qualitative research methodology and this methodology is detailed below. It would have been possible to use a quantitative approach to act as a complement and context for the qualitative. However, for this study the researcher decided not to use a quantitative approach for the reasons given below.

4.1. Choosing between a quantitative and a qualitative approach

Argyle (1992) studying human behaviour from a social psychological approach argues that quantitative laboratory studies lack explanatory power because they underestimate the inventiveness and diversity of human experience. By applying certain scientific methods as a "sieve" by which to create "generalisations" or "objectivity" he suggests that the most interesting and revealing material is lost. Waldrop (1992) in his evaluation of an evolving scientific approach to qualitative methodology acknowledges the interesting and diverse qualities of human exchanges and criticizes the reductionist nature of certain approaches to research. He argues that reductionist knowledge lacks ecological validity. He differentiates between human subjects and other more predictable orderly quantitative systems: "Self organizing adaptive systems which are the qualities of non-static objects are more spontaneous, more disorderly, more alive. In the aim of finding the 'holygrail' of internal validity [researchers] ignore the complexity of external and ecological validity" (p.340). Thus, the potential to actively engage /interact with the participant is missed. Burns (1977)

analysing methodologies goes further suggesting that the qualitative researcher is not concerned with objective truth but rather with the truth, as the informant perceives it.

Nonetheless, Drew and Demack (1998) who use a quantitative method in their study of ethnic minority attainment within an area of London illustrate the usefulness of multilevel modelling prior to developing case studies. They claim that a statistical approach ensures that the different levels of disadvantage that Black pupils face are in this way clearly separated and analysed: " We know that ethnicity, social class and gender are interrelated but the models used are all additive ones...[However, using their multilevel modelling] the disadvantaged ethnic minority children from low income families experience will be measured in, for example, the social class variable as well as ethnic variable. Such disadvantage should not be overlooked."(p.163). This type of clarification through a quantitative approach would have been the most suitable for this study if it had intended to use statistical records of e.g. attainment for large sample of participants from which to identify certain individual case-studies. However, once it was clear that the school dimension was not to be a key focus this quantitative data was not gathered for analysis. In this study diversity, creativity, insider views and sensitivity to contextual factors as they are discovered in the field were considerations from the start.

Uncovering the experiences and various perspectives of the participants required an awareness of the debate between different ideas, an awareness of the researcher's influences and involvement in this debate and also the dynamic rather than fixed qualities in the field. Argyle (1992) suggests that the enquiry that ensues, when data is opened up to a range of perspectives keeps an intellectual debate alive. The need to maintain a process of intellectual versatility is captured by the concept of a "community of debate". This debate flourishes in

circumstances where the purpose of enquiry is to examine different ways of construing vision and not to identify one particular way as the "real" construct. In this particular study that focuses on beliefs and values from a range of perspectives this approach is ideal for two reasons. The different positions themselves create a dialogue and the central fieldwork concentrates on the effects of social interaction both within and between groups in a community. The categories that are created through the data analysis process can provide useful conceptual paradigms but they are not to be used as rigid building blocks. They should leave room for creative elaboration and further innovation. These categories have been created out of the data to capture the diversity and complexity which the researcher uncovered in the field, and as part of a context that develops and responds to a variety of influences. It is thus both spontaneous and alive in the way that Waldrop (1992) has described. A qualitative approach was adopted to capture the variety of in-depth and dynamic responses encountered.

A qualitative approach requires constant evaluations on the part of the researcher. As Fay (1996) suggests it is essential to develop a process of critical intersubjectivity, which encourages: "an open minded, responsive to evidence, accountable, critical –seeking manner" (p. 221) and also the development of understanding between the researcher and the participants. Initially differences between the researcher and the participants meant that the researcher had a very limited understanding of the concerns and ways of life of her participants and had to dramatically adjust her own paradigms and beliefs to accommodate her findings. Fay points to the problems in research where imperialist apologists, represented in the writings of anthropologists, evaluated other cultures through the tinted sunglasses of their own society's values and beliefs and in the process re-established or reinforced a hierarchy of values and beliefs. To avoid reinforcing this kind of prejudice the researcher

must maintain a self-critical and questioning attitude to her own position and perspective. However this self-critical approach alone could not secure an accurate understanding of the participants' feelings, reflections and priorities. To achieve this dimension it is important to use an ethnographic approach.

4.1.2. The ethnographic approach

An ethnographic approach is one of the major qualitative approaches. It was considered appropriate to this research in order to enrich understanding and to capture the richness, complexity, and interdependence of South Asian communities. Ethnographic research aims to uncover and create an accurate description of the perspectives, social practices and behaviour of the people the ethnographer focuses upon. This entails gaining understandings, interpretations and subjective perceptions of the participants. This approach needs to be accompanied with adequate conceptual tools and sensitivity to contexts. Ethnography recognizes the influence of context upon human behaviour. It is also concerned with how the context and the data interact and how situations and thoughts need to be understood with reference to these factors. It allows for a deeper exploration of such things as the social reality of a particular group and how their ideas are generated from a specific set of circumstances. This approach is thus sensitive to cultural variables and was considered highly appropriate to the focus of this study. An ethnographic approach or method allows the researcher to explore another culture within the culture's own terms. As Athanases and Brice-Heath (1995) point out: "Learners are 'cultural' members for anthropologists who strive to understand how individuals become cultural carriers, transmitting and transforming ways of behaving, believing, and valuing within their social group." (1995: 267).

The discoveries and conceptual developments in this thesis have been outcomes of the ethnographic approach adopted. The specific ethnographic approaches that combine in this thesis need to be explored in more detail at this stage. This thesis draws upon a combination of critical ethnography, (Anderson, 1989), post-structural (Clifford:1992) and symbolic interactionist (Rock:2002) ethnographic approaches: these approaches underpin the conceptual developments in this study.

The critical and post-structuralist approaches aim to counter approaches used in conventional ethnographic studies that reinforce a colonialist account of their participants' lives; Rosaldo (1986) writes: "[the] eye of ethnography [often connects with] the I of imperialism."(p.41). Habermas (1973) challenged this hegemony and influenced the development of an "emancipatory model"(Kincheloe and McLaren: 1994) to address the concerns raised above and also to overcome intercultural misunderstanding. Identity politics (Hall: 1990) and antiracist strategies employed by Gillborn (1998) for example also aim to address issues of stereotyping and prejudice that exist in society. Post-structuralist approaches emphasise the dialogic process within ethnography and therefore the importance of: "writ[ing] the researcher into the text" (Gordan, Holland and Lahelm: 2002: 197). Bearing these concerns in mind an ethnographic account needs to interrogate its own paradigms in relation to the perspectives in the wider society, to prevent endorsing versions of reality disseminated by those in power.

Rock (2002) applying a symbolic interactionist approach to ethnography, argues that although ethnographic work is in general not orderly (often involving serendipity, creativity, hard work and good luck, all of which are likely to be subjective, not amenable to positivist evaluation) it is valuable in terms of the breadth and complexity of human relations that it is

able to study and shed light on. Its strength is in its depth of inquiry, flexibility and adaptability in the field.

Included in this ethnographic approach is an inductive approach where data and categories are generated by the participants. This is loosely based on the notion of grounded theory although as Bryman and Burgess (1994) argue in referring to grounded theory: "Rarely is there a genuine interweaving of data collection and theorizing of the kind advocated by Glaser and Strauss. " (Bryman and Burgess, 1994: 6). Within the broad umbrella of an ethnographic approach several options have been included. Tesch (1991) as described in Bryman and Burgess (p.6) identifies a range of different approaches to analysis and these can be linked to the various approaches taken in this thesis. The headings to each of the sections below are categories that Tesch identifies; these are then illustrated by reference to how these were applied to this particular thesis.

i Theory-building approaches

Such approaches aim to generate theory as a primary goal as in grounded theory (Miles and Huberman, 1984). Although this study adopts an ethnographic approach it has been important to ensure that this portrait of a South Asian community does not appear too static, and not to reinforce any stereotypical perceptions about "other", "different" customs and beliefs. To prevent this possibility the researcher has emphasised the dynamic and changeable element of cross- cultural and diverse cultural identities. The researcher has developed a typology and categories that emphasise the changeable development that various participants express to different degrees, which capture the on-going dialogue between the communities and their host

culture. The "emancipatory model" taken from Habermas's concerns (see Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994) described below is also important here.

ii Constructing typologies from the data

An inductive approach to the data collection and analysis aims to construct typologies and understandings from the data itself. As Mason writes: "Your final theory is limited to those categories, their properties and dimensions and statements of relationships that exist in the actual data collected ...conceptual categories ...grounded in both the theoretical perspectives that were applied to the design and the data... collected." (Mason, 1994:219). Within this study the researcher aims to develop concepts that emerge out of the data or research context rather than to take those, which exist a priori, imposing these on the data. Okeley sums up her position succinctly in that she is: " adamant that 'classification is made after, not before the fieldwork.'" (1994: 219).

iii Descriptive or interpretative approaches:

These represent an attempt to understand a different culture or in this case cultures from the point of view of those being researched. This is typical of the ethnographic approach in this thesis and is described in more detail below in relation to Cenoz and Geneese's (1998) process of becoming bicultural. Morgan and Joy (2000) describe this process as cultural validity and suggest: "The concept of cultural validity extends the notion of sociocultural sensitivity ...Thus cultural validity is the degree to which a study is appropriate to a cultural setting. This includes acknowledging the value of views of the people within that culture and conducting research in a way that is acceptable to them, whether this is across countries or sub-cultural groups

[Consequently for Morgan and Joy] the notion of cultural validity was helpful in facilitating ease of research response and in gaining insights into the perceptions of those being researched." (p.4)

iv Sensitivity to cultural and gender bias

Anne-Marie Fortier (1998) in the context of her own research argues that the extent to which gender or ethnicity affects the research process must be recognised. Therefore it was anticipated that encounters with individuals would entail an exploration and clarification of this issue as part of the process of getting to know members of the community as an extension of an ethnographic approach. Also cultural/gender bias exists for respondents as well as for the researcher. In addition the researcher would always have to be aware that her own understanding has been dominated by recourse to the existent paradigms that, however broadminded, are European in origin.

v Approaches based on language:

In this study analysis of key terms in the interview transcripts has been used to help to identify the participants' key themes and concerns. Although it has been seen that language items can mean different things to different people and can contribute to the home/school divide (Vincent, 2001) this is not the language approach adopted here.

vi The ideological/ethical issues that relate to this area of research

As acknowledged earlier, ethnic minorities as well as parents and children can be vulnerable and relatively disempowered groups, (see Vincent, 1992; Modood, 1997; Gillborn and Gipps 1996 and Stanfield, 1994). The researcher working with these participants was aware that she could easily be seen as part of the educational

institution unless she ensured that this was not so. This was then considered to be important in the contact with South Asian communities.

Having established the overall value of the qualitative and inductive approaches that have been used in this study we can now consider the particular ethnographic approach that is taken here. This following section examines why this approach is ideal in terms of the focus of this study and in what ways it was applied.

4.1.3. Queries relating to ethnographic approach.

It is important to point out that the research study was not an ethnography: it did not entail prolonged contact with a whole community with every single aspect considered in depth (the school perspectives for example are limited). The ethnographic approach can also be open to question. Delamont and Hamilton (1986) challenge the open-ended nature of this approach because it is easy for the researcher to select, create categories and prematurely close the investigation before having thoroughly and systematically explored the area. They write: " researchers should be scrupulous in discovering the limits of whatever technique they adopt and accept those limitations explicitly " (1986: 26). These interpretative problems were borne in mind.

Conventional ethnographers have also criticised critical and post-structural approaches' concern with context and argued that their approach interferes with "reality", suggesting that they impose their own agendas upon the processing of data (see Hammersley, 1995). This thesis recognises the importance of this criticism but questions the possibility of objectivity (see Fay, 1996) and neutrality (see Blair 1998) for the researcher implied by a conventional approach. The thesis also questions the veracity of any one "reality".

The subjective process of interpretation does not have to be viewed negatively. There is a need for interpretation, Kakar in the context of studying Indian communities describes the way in which the researcher attempts to put: "imaginative flesh on academic bone"(1996:4). He also uses the analogy of the analyst who needs to find connections between himself and the client to gain genuine insight: " The analyst understands the patient only in so far as he or she understands the disturbance the patient evokes in him- or herself...tension between immersion and reflective parts of myself." This interaction can be seen as a kind of dialogue or negotiation between the researcher and the researched. It is just such a negotiated version of ethnography that a critical ethnographic approach represents. It argues that the realism created by an ethnographer has to be negotiated with participants so that these (often disadvantaged participants) are emancipated and not exploited by the ethnographer's study. In this sense this approach is also a criticism of conventional ethnography. In particular an extension of the critical approach is the emancipatory model based on Habermas's concern (1973). This approach includes the concept of "reflexivity" which has been developed by various theorists, for example Bourdieu (1996) and Buroway (1998). A critical emancipatory text is one that draws upon a range of voices, is collaborative, dialogical and also naturalistically grounded in the worlds of the researched (see Guba, 1990). The following

features were extracted from these general characteristics as strategies of emancipation to be applied to this study.

Strategies of emancipation

- Understanding and extracting knowledge of the main beliefs and values of all the participants.
- Creating a platform for participants' voices to be heard and to contribute to any debate.
- Identifying contrasting sets of perspectives that groups have to different degrees and which are inherently dynamic.
- Appreciating a different lifestyle and set of meanings to life.

This emancipatory approach was adopted in this research taking into consideration the issues that the researcher discovered in the field, the issues the participants themselves raised, the literature on identity and social inequality and the participant observation approach that the researcher adopted. This study is not a piece of "action research". It does not attempt to involve the participants in constructing solutions to the problems that the community faces. Nonetheless the final recommendations in dealing with the home/school divide draw upon the insights that the participants offer. The participants were given the opportunity to articulate and reflect upon their concerns as ethnic minority representatives of society as well as presenting their personal views.

4.1.4. The role of the researcher

In this study it is acknowledged that the researcher influences the interactions with the participants. She also selects and interprets any dialogues or observations and thereby has

considerable control over the results. Thus the researcher influences the data at two levels: i) actively selecting and orchestrating the situations and participants and ii) interpreting the data. Burns (1977) suggests that all researchers unwittingly impose their own value judgements and therefore that all observations are theory laden. Thus in this study it was essential that the researcher should clarify her own experiences and perspectives prior to the research and if necessary during it. Stierer (1983) introduces the concept of a "black market" of information i.e. unrecorded, intuitive thinking that is part of the way of making sense of phenomenological data. Therefore there was a need for the researcher to be conscious and revealing about unofficial data such as, her reflections, and to be upfront about these influences at various times in the research process. In particular Thomas (1995) writing about teachers' perspectives points out that: " An autobiography will add to reliable knowledge if it makes use of individual experience."(p.99), and Rakhit (1998) writing both as a teacher and an Indian living in the UK describes how her experience and predisposition has influenced her interpretation of the material she collected for her PhD research. Critical self awareness is crucial to the ethnographer's understanding of how she affects the process and what she experiences or selects as evidence, even why she focuses on a particular area of concern (see Yonge 1998). The researcher inevitably holds particular values and beliefs that exist within a context and this context can be examined for the structural constraints and opportunities it allows. The ideas and values that the researcher uses exist not only in a context but also within a time – within her own experiential and historical dimensions: "The researcher acts as a reader weaving meanings situated within a memory full of previous texts and knowledge with those within the contextual texts under consideration"(Yonge, 1998). It is therefore essential for the researcher to declare who she is, her perspectives, what influences she has imbibed and details about when and where data was gathered: to be explicit about what she did and why.

This chapter offers examples of the researcher's reflections in terms of these criteria.

There are many different aspects of the role of the researcher that raise ethical and other considerations. The main aspects that were identified are membership, self-identity, interaction, selection and interpretation. The first three relate to the researcher's relationship with her participants and the last two to the researcher's relationship with the data/research process.

4.1.4.1. Membership

The researcher is invariably in a more powerful position than her participants. She does not live in the field, does not share the same socio-economic disposition as some of the participants and has access to powerful groups. This means that she can and will leave the field. She is ultimately not subject to the circumstances in which the participants exist. In this sense she is like a journalist or scavenger, a voyeur. To avoid lulling her participants into a false sense of belonging and sharing she has a moral responsibility to monitor her behaviour as no one else is in a position to do.

Problems of duplicity that are inherent in the researcher's self-identity need to be addressed. Gillborn (1998) warns against the potential for qualitative research to enforce stereotypes if it does not signal the power differential between various participants in certain contexts e.g. where teachers and pupils are invited to discuss matters. The researcher, like the teacher, is an academic with access to resources (middle class) which are powerful, and which may differ from the resources that are available to the participants. However, one way that the researcher can tackle this problem is to recognise that although she has certain advantages she is by no

means as knowledgeable as her participants in certain areas, as Gillborn (1998) writes: "participants in 'subordinate' positions (for they [can]lack formal training and institutional influence) sometimes understand more than their 'superiors'." (p.52)

To act with a clear conscience the researcher must be aware of the following issues;

- Her level of detachment and involvement, her emotional reaction to different participants.
- Her own prejudices and limitations.
- The fact that she is the one who makes judgements and assessments about the validity of her participants' beliefs and practices, will select who to interview and whose story is the most convincing or appropriate for her study. She will be responsible for the orchestration of material that is for publication and wider circulation. To maintain a sense of moral accountability the researcher must feel open to learn, discover and believe in her participants' experiences and accounts.

Initially the researcher arrives in the field as an outsider. In this position she has a perspective of the field that is quite different to what it will become. This initial position is liminal, being on the margins and has certain benefits. There is likely to be a sharpness of perception that comes from being on the border or coming from outside and not yet immersed. There is though a paradox here in that it is only through a closer involvement and experience of groups and cultures that subtleties are realised and real issues come to light. It is important then to include both an insider's and an outsider's position.

4.1.4.2. Self identity

The interviewer must also be aware that how others view her identity will inevitably influence their reaction to her and that thus will affect the process overall. She will need to be open to the extent to which she shares any commonality of identity with the participants. The commonality that the researcher shared with the participants in this study is clarified in sections 4.2.1. and 4.2.4.3. below.

Hunt (1984) in a study of the police force whose members had not studied degrees realised that she was operating in a culture where several features of her identity including being a female, academic outsider and on occasion White were impediments to her development of rapport and trust in the culture of a male- dominated institution, as it was then. It may be helpful that the participants feel that the researcher is a respectable and responsible citizen. The occupation of researcher may well seem dilettante and insubstantial to members of the group that is being studied. Freilich (1970) working as an anthropologist in Trinidad found that the Mohawk steelworkers regarded him as: "some kind of scholarly tramp looking for a home"(Cited in Ellen: 1984: 113). It can therefore be helpful if the researcher has a conventional vocation that the participants can respect.

Also the researcher working in schools and visiting people in homes needs to be aware that as an academic she might be perceived as: "living in an ivory tower, ...[and] removed from the harsh realities of school [or community] life"(Athanases and Heath; 1995: 271). Mirza (1998) describing the initial lack of respect from the South Asian community she researched, writes: "My professional status as a researcher, associated with a university, carried very little weight. I was thus perceived of as 'statusless'." (p.86) To address this potential disadvantage the researcher spent considerable time mixing with the children, teachers and community

members prior to engaging in setting-up any interviews. This allowed potential participants to get to know her on a more everyday and ordinary level.

Walsh (1998) outlines categories in relation to participant observation. Walsh identifies four positions for the researcher:(i) the complete participant which involves "going native", (ii) the complete observer in which the researcher does not participate nor identify with the participants, (iii) the participant as observer in which the researcher interacts and identifies with the participants to some extent and (iv) the observer as participant in which the researcher's limited participation in social events may fail to incorporate more depth of understanding and render the results relatively superficial though the problems associated with going native are avoided. These categories may also be related to categories suggested by Hutnik (1991) (for ethnic minorities responding to typologies offered in a census form). Hutnik's categories are: *disassociative, assimilative, acculturalist* and *marginal.* These typologies helped to clarify the researcher's own identification of her role.

First, *disassociative* in which the person identifies completely with the ethnic group to which she is ascribed i.e. as being completely part of the minority ethnic group. This perception would correspond most closely to the researcher 'going native' or becoming a complete participant.

Second, *assimilative*, in which the person identifies completely with the dominant culture. This option corresponds most closely with a 'complete observer', with the researcher remaining outside the group and not belonging or interacting to the group.

Third, *acculturalist*, in which the person can perceive her identity as relevant or related to

both a minority group identity and that of the host culture. This self- identity is most closely related to the participant-observer position. (This position relates most closely to the ways in which the researcher chose to interact and identify with the participants of this study).

Finally, Hutnik creates a fourth option that of the *marginal* response. This is when the person chooses to see herself in terms of "other" relevant social factors such as class i.e. those that differ from the social factors that her participants identify for themselves. This self-identity can possibly be seen as linked to the position as either a complete observer or as an observer participant.

4.1.4.3. The researcher's interaction with the participants

The extent to which the researcher interacts with the participants relates to the degree to which the interviewer sees herself taking on any of the four positions which were identified in relation to participant observation by Walsh (1998)noted above.

Another way of considering the researcher's interaction with her respondents is to use Byram's (1998) matrix of four different intercultural competences in the context of foreign language teaching and learning. After all, the researcher will need to demonstrate a certain level of intercultural competence in her interactions with probably another 'culture'. Byram suggests the need to understand or mediate between cultures: to see the strengths and weaknesses of different cultures and not to affiliate with one in particular. In his matrix he identifies four affective and cognitive changes that are required to abandon ethnocentric attitudes as part of this process. These four processes can be aligned to the processes of the ethnographic researcher and have been translated as such:

First, " savoir faire" [knowing what to do] requires openness towards another culture and ability to see one's own culture for its weaknesses as well as strengths, to distance oneself. This could be seen as equivalent to the initial stage that the researcher must engage in on entering a field, that of being accepted into another cultural group when the members recognise these qualities and this openness.

Second, "savoir apprendre"[knowing what to learn] involves collecting data and analysing it, and requires an ability to decentre or to see a situation within its context. This dimension was a central rationale for this researcher's visit to the Subcontinent (a development from the initial methodology as described later).

Third, "savoir" [knowledge] to understand a new culture in terms of the meanings it holds for the natives: how their particular values and beliefs are applied to particular contexts and situations that arise for them. This is related to identifying certain key factors that are particular to anyone culture and was apparent to the researcher when she was able to understand the cultures in the Subcontinent as well as those in her research location in England.

Finally, four, to apply all these "savoirs" to real situations. This was critical when the researcher's experience of being on the Subcontinent was used to gather a greater insight or understanding into the situation that exists and is experienced for South Asians living in the UK. Drawing upon Byram's matrix it was clear that in the eyes of the participants that a visit to the Subcontinent would give much greater credence to the researcher's connection to their beliefs and values.

However participatory involvement raises problems in terms of the degree of detachment and participation, including the extent to which the researcher can remain detached and objective. Sarsby (1980) studying economically deprived families considers that the ethnographer will always be oscillating between empathy and repulsion, home and strangeness, and seeing and not seeing. Involvement also holds the potential to deceive both the researcher and to a greater extent the participants. The researcher as a visitor to the field rather than an inhabitant who belongs to it is placed in a precarious position in terms of her participation. To some extent the researcher wishes to create a sense of belonging or acceptance within the group she intends to make discoveries about. Ultimately this means that when she leaves the field she betrays a certain trust that will have developed if the participants have allowed her to belong. There is not the same loyalty for her as there is for those who live in the field permanently. Thus a sense of duplicity can exist. This is not to deny that attachment to the field can also develop. Abu-Lughod (1986) researching the Bedouin community anticipates her loss and sadness once she has left the field. "It is the quiet life I will miss. There is no loneliness, always someone to sit with. I feel so much part of something here. I don't remember ever feeling that before." (p.xiii).

In order to state clearly her independence from and yet dependence upon the field the researcher undertook rigorous and persistent reflection, encapsulated in diaries (see appendix six), and in discussions with academics and South Asian community representatives and social workers and participants throughout the data processing. Thus there was self-growth and greater insight gained during the data collection process.

However the researcher involved not only herself but others in order to access certain

participants and this may look like detective work. Boas, (1919) condemns the use of anthropology as a means of spying on others. The ethnographer can be seen as a "collector of evil gossip" (Freilich: 1970: cited in Ellen: 1984: 113). The people that the gatekeepers give the researcher access to also restrict her. Klein (1976) writes:

"Social science is not engaged by 'industry' or organisations but by individuals in gatekeeping or sponsorship or client roles. The outcome therefore, is always mediated through the needs and resources, and roles of such individuals"(p.225). One problem with gatekeepers is that they provide access to various people but they also have their own power relations with the people they introduce. They also initially describe the researcher and her project to others as well as making their own selections about who to introduce the researcher to. In this study the researcher sometimes had to ensure that gatekeepers were familiar with her agenda, and were not just following their own desire to introduce her to people they liked or wanted her to be influenced by. However, this was a sensitive issue because on occasion their judgements enlightened the researcher in terms of issues that she would otherwise have ignored. Gatekeepers were often also protective about their connections and wanted to ensure that the researcher would behave in a responsible way and provide some gift of acknowledgement to the people they referred her to. In general the researcher's dependence upon gatekeepers was also dependent upon "trust".

4.1.5. Authenticity and trustworthiness

In this study the data is analysed with reference to concepts which Denzin and Lincoln (1994) consider to be important to ensure rigour and validity in qualitative research: authenticity and trustworthiness. Although these reconceptualisations may not be considered to be analytical techniques, they do prompt a type of processing of information that ensures that certain important issues are considered throughout the analysis.

Authenticity was generated by the participants' own suggestions and ideas on ways forward, the focus on what they considered to be the most important elements in their lives. Their responses were recorded, discussed and checked with them.

Trustworthiness is comprised of four elements: credibility, transferability, reliability and confirmability. Credibility was ensured from the participants' feedback and response to the analysis, which the researcher shared with them. This occurred after the interviews and visits and was recorded in the discussion. Furthermore, prior to any confirmation of results, the participants were invited to comment on any possible misunderstandings and to offer further explanations, which they wished to contribute. To ensure transferability the results and discussion sections of the analysis are closely related to theoretical propositions to existing literature in a further layer of analysis provided in chapter six. In terms of reliability, the approach adopted in this present study could be replicated within limits, since the procedures are documented in detail. However, it is important to mention that the categories generated relate to this particular research population. Also, the participants developed a particular relationship with the researcher as the interviewer and it would be inaccurate to assume that their answers and responses would be the same if someone else interviewed them. Finally, to achieve confirmability, the initial manner in which this present study was set up sought to ensure considerations and advice from others throughout the research process. In the first place, several South Asian educators, social worker and community members were asked to offer their opinions and advice and their comments influenced the way in which the research was later carried out. Head teachers, educationalists, academics who focus on issues concerning ethnic minorities and specifically South Asian parents and pupils were also encouraged to offer their advice and views as well as academics within the university

supervising the research. Therefore the way in which the study was carried out was greatly enhanced by negotiations and conversations with a variety of insiders and outsiders.

4.1. 6. Ethical considerations

The establishment of a code of ethics should ensure that the moral rights and vulnerability of participants are protected. Certain considerations and principles are universal and apply to any approach or method that a researcher might employ. However, an ethnographic approach places a particular onus of responsibility on the researcher for one fundamental reason: that it aims to gather in-depth insight and knowledge of people's lives, to gain a qualitative understanding. Stanfield (1994) writes of conduct in qualitative research: "as a structured power relationship and as an intricate process of creating, interpreting, and disseminating knowledge" (p. 179). To achieve a degree of immersion into the lives of others however limited the researcher using an ethnographic approach can easily breach areas of privacy and intimacy. Furthermore, as this type of research often entails an exploration of a disempowered, or culturally divergent, group the researcher can expose the participants to further misunderstanding and reinforce stereotypical views about them. This can have serious ethical repercussions in a political, social and emotional sense. There are then fundamental ethical considerations that must be observed and then more subtle and complex issues that underlie close, often emotional encounters.

The participants' rights to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity.

It is essential that the researcher ensures that the participants are aware of their rights. This is particularly important in a study that concerns another culture, and one in which the participants may be to some degree not aware of their rights, or may feel inferior to the status of the researcher or the gatekeepers. Akeroyd (1984) in the context of writing about ethics in

relation to informants, the profession and government, states that the researcher must be sensitive and respectful of the:

"participants' rights to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity and not to be studied [the option to withdraw from the study]; to be informed about methods and aims of the study, its anticipated consequences and potential benefits, risks and disadvantages, and its sources of sponsorship and funding; to be fairly remunerated for time and assistance; to be given feedback on results and, where practicable to be consulted over publications; and have legal and contractual rights in data respected"(p.138). These considerations are pertinent to the vulnerability of the group of people chosen for this research.

As groups in some cultures may be less heard and their views assumed rather than known, there is always the possibility that their way of life will be misinterpreted. In an attempt to uncover perspectives and experiences, the circumstances and backgrounds that lie behind beliefs and practices it is essential to allow space for any misunderstandings to be corrected and acknowledged. Therefore, in this study, the researcher always referred back to members of the group to check whether her interpretations of a conversation or understanding of an idea was correct. Areas of investigation were also checked out e.g. questions to be asked at the interview after having sought the advice of members of the group to ensure that these questions were not too invasive or insensitive to their position and concerns.

Considerations of the process

The research process entails three essential parts, all of which require ethical consideration in terms of sensitivity to stakeholder interests. They all also affect both the researcher and the participants. They include the collection, interpretation and publication of research findings. McDonough and McDonough (1998) in writing about research in a linguistic context suggest

five important issues that need to be considered in this process. These relate to the following: 1) the situation in which the research takes place; 2) protection of data for both the participants and the researcher; 3) the question of who owns the data; 4) agreements about what material is to be circulated and published and finally 5), the extent to which it is possible to form generalisations about the data in relation to other contexts. All these aspects have been considered (see below).

The researcher must be granted permission to do the research by people who have the authority. In this case this entailed references from her supervisor, from the community members who are gatekeepers to the participants as well as from the school since the school programme could have been disrupted by the researcher's own timetable and requirements. She must negotiate when, how, where and what will take place with the schoolteachers and social workers whom she intends to incorporate into her study. As well as community members the researcher has also to identify gatekeepers and knowledgeable members of the community, to be aware of where and when it is suitable to undertake the interviews and what it is suitable to enquire about. For instance in this case the researcher deferred contact with certain Muslim participants until after the Eid celebrations.

In relation to the protection of data both for the participants and for the validity of the data, the researcher wrote a statement to ensure that the participants had the ultimate say in what was committed on paper to be circulated. Throughout the process the participants had every right to withdraw information they had already given or for that matter not to answer questions or participate at times. Therefore to ensure the validity of the information the researcher also conferred with the participants and checked that any comment or information they gave was accurately recorded or interpreted. Certain members of the community were

asked to explain the implications of certain comments or issues if the researcher was in any doubt. It was also generally understood by the researcher that any observation, interview or recorded data was ultimately the property of the participants or of those who provided the information. Finally all the participants as well as the locality and schools have remained anonymous and there is no direct reference to any of their names.

The process of feedback and discussion about what is published and circulated was carried out in the manner that the researcher has already used in previous work. The participants were sent copies of their sessions with the researcher and asked to comment and confirm that all the details were acceptable to them. Any disagreements or misunderstandings that did arise were adjusted in favour of the participants' understanding.

However, there are other factors that demand a high degree of sensitivity and awareness from the researcher. These are less easily incorporated into a set of procedures or practices and yet are implicit in close encounters. They do not form part of an explicit ethical code, yet they should be part of the metacognitive awareness that the ethnographer must have to avoid disabling and further disempowering the group. They are ethical issues in the sense that if they are ignored the researcher could be accused of abusing her power. The researcher requires this awareness to monitor and self-assess her behaviour.

Ethnographic research has the potential to empower participants but it can also infringe on their rights and place them in vulnerable exposed situations. The issues that the researcher must attend to centre around the potential that the researcher has to deceive the participants. The researcher must make decisions about what to expose and what to consider private, even if what is discovered could be seen to be illegal. Guba and Lincoln (1989) write that: "

evaluators have to be clear, direct and undeceptive ...deception destroys dignity, respect and agency and is also counterproductive to goals"(p.122). The researcher must also make decisions about what information could be harmful to the group if it is revealed to a wider audience or incorrectly referred to by others. There is some debate among those using an ethnographic approach about the degree of integrity a researcher can achieve. Bulmer (1982) considers that covert observation is "neither ethically justified, nor practically necessary, nor in the best interests of sociology as an academic pursuit" (p.217). For Ditton participation observation is inevitably unethical "by virtue of being interactionally deceitful"(Ditton, 1977: 10). The transparency of approach used in this study tried to avoid this kind of deception.

There are then several important ethical and methodological concerns that the research must consider and incorporate to validate and ensure scientific rigour when she applies an ethnographic approach to the research processes as detailed below in the second section.

Part two: The Research and Methods

4.2.0. Having chosen an ethnographic approach as a methodology it was then necessary to consider what methods would be appropriate to answer the research question. The research question asks about the views of South Asian communities on the home/school divide and also what cultural, social values in these communities might inhibit or promote communication with school. These concerns require an insight into "who" exists in the communities both inside and outside the school and what perspectives and experiences they may have. To discover this range of perspectives and experiences the researcher had to progressively develop her knowledge and build trust among the various groups before she could describe and analyse her findings. Accessing the community, acknowledging her own

perceptual limitations and the need to adapt the design to accommodate a growing understanding of the complex dynamics between communities and school was a lengthy process that demanded flexibility, openness to change and involved using gatekeepers. The researcher had to change her range of participants and also her approach. These adaptations were a fundamental part of the ethnographic, inductive approach and at the same time they reveal the process of change necessary in cross-cultural exchanges. Only when the researcher had recognised and accommodated these dimensions could the findings be organised into categories. These categories should help to describe where access to communities might lie and how communication might be improved.

The sections within this second part explain what instruments and focus were originally adopted and then describes the changes that had to be made including the change from an outsider's to an insider's focus and design and second the visit to the Subcontinent. These changes were also related to the participant observation approach that the researcher took. The data collection and analysis from the visit to the Subcontinent is presented in the appendix, rather than the text, both because it was not analysed and categorised in the same way as the data in the UK, and also because this data supported the researcher's understanding of the contexts rather than representing views of the UK residents (see Appendix six).

4. 2.1. The research design

The research design for this ethnographic study of a small collection of South Asian communities combines a range of data collection processes, a range of methodologies: informal as well as semi-structured interviews: group and one to one interviews; diaries of the researcher's reflections, encounters, engagements and general experiences; observations and

participation in community centres; participation in school lessons rather than just observation; attending celebrations and festivities, visiting people's homes as well as participation in the home life of families both in the UK and on the Subcontinent. This range allowed for comprehensivity and also for triangulation of views. Even though the focus of the study changed, the approach remained the same using the same instruments.

The original research question focused on a possible comparison between constructs fostered in schools (academic success) and possibly different constructs within the surrounding communities. The starting point for the sample was the school. The choice of participants can be seen as following three stages.

1) Initially the researcher considered incorporating a broad range of ethnic groups including the White working class. This was because her initial interest was in understanding what was going on in communities that owned a different cultural capital to that of the school and especially those that were negatively stereotyped by the school and wider society.

2) However, after some tentative groundwork with leaders from various community groups it became clear that the researcher's appearance was associated with the identity of South Asian groups and this created an immediate interest from those groups in particular. Responses then from other groups might have been less positive. Furthermore, a more detailed exploration of just this group alone revealed that there was a range of classes, socio-economic, cultural, religious and educational differences within this group alone (although it is important to register that this is an inner-city, predominantly working class area). It seemed appropriate that the researcher should take advantage of her disposition and identity.

3) Having decided on a particular area and constituency the research design was planned as follows.

4.2.2. The choice of sample and the research design

The researcher used sampling of various types (Cohen and Manion, 1989) which then accommodated the change in focus and research design. Three types of non – probability sampling: convenience, purposive and snowballing sampling were used. The researcher used convenience sampling in terms of using South Asian communities close to her own home: these communities were named Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Sikh (using the communities' own names as explained earlier).Two local schools were used where there was a South Asian teacher, one as a pilot school to try our the teacher interview and observe pupils and one as the main school to access the teacher, pupils and their parents. The focus in this initial state was still "constructs of success". The original design was planned as follows:

- Pilot school observation (year six)
- Pilot school teacher interview
- Main school observation (year six)
- Main school teacher interviews
- Main school interviews with pupils
- Main school interviews with parents of these pupils.

Children in year six at a primary school were initially chosen for the following reasons:

i) These children would still have one teacher so it was assumed that the parents would be particularly aware of the influence of the single teacher in their school lives, unlike the situation at secondary school.

ii) By this stage children and their parents would have had a substantial experience of school life and thus have acquired opinions about the educational system as they experience it and may well have developed a relationship with the teachers over that year (contact in Spring and Summer terms). i.e. they would be able to comment on constructs of success.

iii) At a later age i.e. in secondary school young people are more likely to be experiencing complex social and emotional relationships with their peers and be less accessible to their parents (Coleman, 1996). Year six represents the most developed stage of primary education. Secondary or middle school education exists in a far more diverse and complex environment administratively and structurally. As such it may well be more difficult to control for a variety of confounding variables including the lack of continuous contact with one teacher as an influence.

Both the main and pilot school were chosen for the following reasons:

i) They had a mix of ethnic backgrounds and a predominance of South Asian children amongst their pupils.

ii) They were interested in and supportive of the issues that concern this research, i.e. the need for research into parents' beliefs and expectations.

iii) The two teachers (for the pilot and main schools) were both of South Asian origin and taught year six children, which was particularly lucky as these teachers had taught other age groups in the previous years.

The main primary school was right in the centre of the inner city area. locality and had a high percentage of South Asian pupils both Bangladeshi and Pakistani as well as Somali pupils and a transitory population as it took many of the refugees in the locality. It had a population of two hundred and forty two pupils and was known to have low academic attainment in terms of National Curriculum Tests and was consequently well supported by the ethnic minority achievement team (EMAT).

To support this design and to orientate the research in terms of appropriate topics, a number of people were interviewed in two rounds:

- A first round (social workers and members of the communities)
- A second round those identified as key spokespeople by the communities e.g. leaders in the local centres.

However, two main problems occurred, once these two rounds of interviews had been completed and the first stages of the research design pursued. There were problems with accessing families through the schools and responses gained from interviews in the communities showed that the focus was ill-advised.

4.2.2.1.Access problems and changes in the sample

There were difficulties in accessing the parents of pupils via the main school in the class that the researcher was working and observing in (year six) and also there was an imbalance of cultural representation in this class in terms of the primary characteristics of the communities. For instance there was only one Sikh pupil in the class and yet Sikhs though in the minority in the locality were forceful and influential members of this South Asian community as a

whole. Miles and Huberman (1994) note that in qualitative analysis initial assumptions may need to be changed: " the party is less important than the follow up reflection and sleuthing." (p.270). The researcher was unable to match this wider South Asian community characteristic with the availability of pupils in the class. She did manage to discover two Sikh pupils in years 5 and 4 but only one in year 6. Also, none of the Pakistani pupils or Bangladeshi she worked with in class had parents who were willing to get involved as participants. This meant taking an alternative route to accessing parents linked to the school. Eventually by talking to people in local community centres contact was established with parents in this school. The researcher thus had to consider parents in the school in general rather than in the specific class to get the quota she required.

Gaining access to communities was key to addressing the research question: the range of perspectives and position that the researcher uncovered and identified were founded upon this access. It was essential that the researcher established a good relationship with the various community leaders and their contacts as relationships within the communities were closely interwoven. Furthermore, the researcher discovered there was a general lack of trust among the South Asian communities in terms of the school being able to act as a gatekeeper to identify suitable respondents. This was because many of the South Asian parents at the school did not use it as a community link and kept relatively distant from it apart from taking their children to and from the school gates. This crucial factor influenced a major change in the research design, which is explained later.

As well as the problems of access there were also problems of language discovered in the first term while the researcher was attending the school as explained earlier. In an initial round of interviews with parents from the main school it was discovered that some parents

were unable to speak English sufficiently and therefore their children had to translate. This meant that the understandings and insights were limited if they were to be taken from transcripts.

4.2.2.2. New Representatives in the community

Although this sample of parents had been taken to represent the three South Asian groups as the groups themselves chose to identify themselves (as Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Sikh) it became clearer that these initially chosen participants were not able to "represent" these groups adequately. It became useful for the researcher to seek out perspectives from people other than just the parents form this school inorder to incorporate a greater awareness of other culture's experiences. To use Stanfield's words, writing in the context of ethnic modelling in qualitative data, there is a: "need to confess human biases up front and a need to create paradigms grounded in experiences of people of color"(1994: 185).

In the search for appropriate representation the following considerations about individuals were used. Here there was a degree of purposive sampling since those chosen as this new sample were those thought to be best able to represent the views of the communities. Here the choice was influenced by those encountered in the initial supportive round of interviews, both in terms of advice given as to who would be a good spokesperson and also in terms of who was actually encountered. Interview selection can be affected by the fact that people may select themselves and also others (see Walsh, 1998). People needed to be chosen who:

- were articulate in the English language with some understanding of the importance of the research.
- had the capacity to reflect and extend upon ideas.
- were confident and expressed a sense of responsibility about their community.

- had a rapport with the researcher.
- had a warm and welcoming approach and who belonged to the community even if they did have reservations about the community, and who nonetheless identified with its South Asian elements.
- NOT anyone who was too dominating with his/her own agenda and unable to answer questions.
- NOT anyone who was indifferent to the project
- NOT anyone who was hostile to their own communities

There were a limited number of participants to access for a variety of reasons. These included the following considerations: First many potential participants were too busy with work and had several children to care for and thus were not available. Second, not all participants were fluent in English and capable of answering some of the in-depth questions that the researcher needed to pose. Third, many were shy and not confident enough to be part of the research and fourth, the researcher was biased in that she only wanted to include participants who were enthusiastic about their involvement in the research. This was because she wanted to discuss issues in as much depth as possible. The latter factor needs to be recognised as a limitation and it may have been possible to access more people if there had been a longer time to build up rapport i.e. more than one year. Therefore the researcher used convenience sampling in terms of availability.

The choice of respondents to augment the initial group of parents thus relied on several factors. The researcher then proceeded to access a variety of community centres, social workers and community representatives as well as the schools. The central figures that later became interviewees were not all accessed immediately. One of the ways of identifying such

respondents was contacting the participants in the communities the researcher had already interviewed earlier in the process in terms of their insight and understanding of the issues that had arisen during the research.

Thus the research design changed in terms of the sample. It also had to be changed because of the change in research question. Initially the research design aimed to uncover links between home and school through interviewing parents and pupils in an attempt to elicit how much the parents and communities did or did not know about the school in terms of achievement/success. The focus was then changed to address the issue of what the school did not know about the communities. It avoided a deficit model of the parents' knowledge in favour of insights into the way the communities organised and conducted their lives, and of understanding their beliefs and values, and then within these priorities locating how the communities placed the school. Another important feature were the allegiances within communities. The educational system's assumptions about parents and pupils as linked in terms of a separated, independently orientating nuclear family set up became less relevant, and only existed in one instance. Pupils as well as parents saw themselves as members of communities and not just members of families. Pupils often relied upon aunts, uncles, grandparents, older siblings and community members who were not related through blood to help them in various ways including in relation to schoolwork. Thus it was entirely appropriate to interview members of the wider communities and not just family members in order to understand the views of parents.

The new research design followed the original design of: Pilot school observation, pilot school teacher interview, main school observation, main school teacher interviews and main

school interviews with pupils as detailed above. However instead of the main school interviews with parents of these pupils the later research design incorporated:

- interviews with families connected with this school (facilitated by the community centres) and
- further interviews with selected interviewees both from these communities and from the community representatives chosen to support input for the initial research question and, categorised and chosen for their representativeness of attitudes in general.

The researcher used "purposive" sampling to extract certain samples from the original quota at later stages in the fieldwork process i.e. the final interviewees were identified later as a result of interviews with various participants. This purposive sampling aimed to encapsulate the sense of dynamic and difference within each community. However, originally the process of accessing various potential participants depended upon the use of effective links through gatekeepers and in this sense involved "snowballing".

4.2.3. The participants in the sample

In total the number of core participants involved in interviews totalled thirty-eight (38). The total number of interviews with these core participants that were either taped or written up directly after the interview amounted to fifty (50). In addition to these core interviews there were also sixteen (16) interviews with social workers and community workers in the initial stage of accessing the communities and prior to the identification of participants, and thirteen (13) interviews with teachers and academics on the Subcontinent. Including all interviews this comes to a total of seventy-nine (79).

FIG 4.1

Number of Key participants

Teachers	**Pupils**	**Families**	**Community Representatives**	**Total**	**Interviewees**
2	1	Bangladeshi	Bangladeshi		Bangladeshi = 3:

FIG 4.1

Number of Key participants

Teachers	**Pupils**	**Families**	**Community Representatives**	**Total**	**Interviewees**
2	1 preparatory group 1 Bangladeshi group 1 Pakistani group 1 Sikh group = 4x3	Bangladeshi 4 Pakistani 3 Sikh 4	Bangladeshi 5 Pakistani 4 Sikh 4		Bangladeshi = 3: composed of community representatives. Pakistani = 3: composed of 1 community representative and 2 from the families. Sikh = 3: composed of 1 community representative and 2 from the families.
2	**12**	**11**	**13**	**38**	**9** (from the 38)

The participants in the UK were all of South Asian descent and all from the same locality. However, the teachers only belonged to this particular area of the city by virtue of teaching in the local schools and they lived elsewhere in the city.

As the researcher is monolingual she had to find participants in the UK who could speak English as this was preferable to finding translators. This needs to be recognised as a limitation of the thesis. Although all the participants were of South Asian descent they comprised Punjabi Sikhs, Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims. The teachers comprised one who was an atheist and the other a Gujarati Hindu who was not overly committed to her faith. The participants came from a diverse range of classes or castes, although the majority of the families came from a lower middle class or working class background. In the categories used for the data analysis it will be seen that there is a mixture of ethnic and religious identities (Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Sikh). These categories were adopted because this is how the participants themselves classified their own identities. The Sikhs did not call themselves Punjabis and although the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis stated that their Muslim identity was very important to them they chose to focus on their cultural differences rather than similar religious identity as crucial to their self definition within the South Asian community at large.

4.2.3.1.The community representatives (interviewed initially and used as a source of final interviewees)

These representatives were recommended by the communities themselves as knowledgeable about the values and beliefs of their cultures and religions. They were also identified as bilingual and able to discuss South Asian alternative practices and beliefs with a relative outsider. Several representatives were identified from each cultural group: five from the Bangladeshi community, and four from both the Pakistani and Sikh communities.

4.2.3.2.Pupils (from the main school).

In a year six class of twenty-seven pupils there were fourteen South Asian pupils (the other thirteen were a combination of Somalian, African –Caribbean and White). Of these fourteen pupils ten were interviewed. The selection of these ten was as a consequence of discussion with the teacher and also the researcher's observation. Of these ten year six pupils: five were Bangladeshi, four were Pakistani and one was Sikh. (There were four group interviews: one preparatory interview and three with each of the cultural groups). In each group interview there were three (3) pupils giving a total of twelve (12) pupils in all. In the preparatory group interview two pupils were Bangladeshi and one was Pakistani. In the Bangladeshi and Pakistani group interviews all three in each group were in the year six class. In the Sikh group interview one pupil was in this year six was involved and the other two pupils came from years five and four. Accessing the Sikh pupils was difficult because there were very few in the school and especially in the upper end of the school (years five and six).

	Year 6	Year 5	Year 4
Initial group interview: 2 Bangladeshi and 1Pakistani	3		
Bangladeshi group interview	3		
Pakistani group interview	3		
Sikh group interview	1	1	1

4.2.3.3. Families

Four Bangladeshi families, three Pakistani and four Sikh families were interviewed, eleven families in total. Both the Pakistani and Bangladeshi families were eventually accessed through the communities but none were accessed through the school. However, all the Sikh

families were accessed through the school.

All the families interviewed had children who were pupils in the school. Not all of these pupils were in year six, nor were all the pupils part of the interview groups. Only four children in the final interview groups were related to families (three Bangladeshi pupils and one Pakistani). The families and pupils were not treated as nuclear units as explained earlier, but representative views were taken from individuals in each of the three communities. Sometimes people's own individual views comprised a range of attitudes which belong to several modes of response (explained in more depth below). In other words in general these are not case studies but investigations of viewpoints. This aspect is discussed in greater detail below.

4.2.3.5. Final interviewees

The final interviewees were identified from the community representatives and families. Three were identified from each cultural group to represent a spectrum of attitudes. They became the central participants to represent the communities' perspectives and experiences. It is also important to note here that not every interviewee was a parent (P3 was not), but rather they were those family and community representatives who were most able to shed light upon the situation (the purposive sampling). The fieldwork with the families in general revealed that the parents were not necessarily those most able to discuss or comprehend issues related to the education of their children at school. Often older siblings, aunts, grandparents (if they were more educated than the parents) and other relatives were more aware of these issues. Thus one older sibling of twenty- two years, unmarried and living with the family, who was very articulate about both the influences of her own education, her younger siblings and her parents' experiences became an interviewee in the last phase of the fieldwork.

4.2.3.5.The two teachers

The two teachers in this study were chosen because they are both of South Asian origin: one taught at the pilot school (teacher X) and one at the main school (teacher M) respectively that the researcher studied. The schools' head teachers suggested that the researcher should approach these teachers because of their conspicuous common identity with South Asian pupils. As the researcher was initially particularly interested in studying year six she was very fortunate to have access to teachers of South Asian origin teaching in this year, especially as there were typically no other South Asian teachers teaching at these schools. It is also relevant to note that although neither teacher, typically as well, lives in the locality, they are both mothers and therefore likely to share concerns about equal opportunity with other non-white parents.

4.2.4. The instruments used

As mentioned earlier a variety of instruments were used in the ethnographic approach adopted (interviews, observations and informal notes).

4.2.4.1. Interviews

Responses to questions in an interview will provide one layer of information. However, the interviewer is also given the opportunity to observe and interact with the participant, which in itself provides important information. It is thus vital for the interviewer to be aware of the disposition and feelings of the participants, their vulnerability and the needs that they voice. In fact on a more positive note the interview can be seen as an opportunity for the participants to feel that they have been heard and given space to explore and articulate their preoccupations in this area of their lives. The interview has the potential to empower the

participants, however, the interviewer must be aware that she has essentially more power in the situation and must work to establish a sense of equality and empathy.

The problem with an emphasis on empathy and sharing is that despite the recognition of all these factors there is also the reality that however hard the interviewer can try she will not be able to be equal nor to create an entirely natural situation. The situation is arranged and contrived. The interview data may not concur with the reality that the interviewee experiences. Seale (1998) notes that: "Faced with an interviewee's account, researchers can only investigate the 'version', which the account seeks to display." (p. 203). Triangulation, using data from other sources should ensure possible contrived nature of the interview is counter-balanced.

Furthermore, the interviewer will feel more easily empathetic with some participants or find that it is easier to draw material out of one participant rather than another, and the chances of being consistent are variable.

However the interviews for this research were set up to try and ensure similarity of setting. The participants were interviewed in similar surroundings where the interference or environmental impact was relatively insignificant. This was generally in the participants' own homes, unless they were community spokespeople or alternatively pupils in the school. Similar questions were asked. Also the families were shown copies of a letter describing the situation for South Asian women to see if they agreed with the ideas in the letter. Pupils were interviewed in focus groups. This ensured pupils' confidence and placed the interviewer in the minority and the pupils in the majority to address the fundamental imbalance of power.

Several different kinds of interviews were undertaken. There were informal interviews, which occurred on numerous visits into the community and through chatting to people in the community centres or workplaces as well as homes. By contrast the semi-structured interviews were prearranged and a selection of questions prepared. Not all of these semi-structured interviews were tape recorded due to some participants' anxieties about being recorded; those not tape-recorded were written up immediately after the interview.

The interviews (included in appendices 1-5) were initially based upon topics that Asian Social workers and community representatives as well as the gatekeepers who worked in the field had already suggested. To put the participants at ease the researcher introduced these topics. For instance the pupils' interviews started by asking them about their homes of origin and their culture and beliefs. At other times when topics or issues were suggested that the participants found difficult to describe or respond to the researcher would return to these other key areas to reassure the participant that she was interested in their concerns and did not want to impose interests upon them. For instance if participants felt they had little knowledge of the National Curriculum or even of what the teacher wanted, to avoid making the participant feel ignorant, the researcher would quickly return to a subject which renewed the participant's confidence. The researcher was then the one who was relatively more ignorant and needed to be taught or told. Some areas of interest for the researcher demanded a moment's reflection for the participants and therefore hesitations were not interrupted. For instance philosophical questions like: "What is it like to be a Pakistani?" or "What does the word 'success' mean to you?" were questions that the participants wanted to answer but needed more time to reflect on. At these times the participants sometimes asked to be asked again later on in the interview. This was quite different from the abrupt or uncertain responses that occurred when issues relating to school or the curriculum arose. Then the

participant did not ask for more time to reflect, possibly because they did not have the necessary knowledge to draw upon.

Number of interviews

The number of interviews covered a period divided into three phases as described below. The total number of key interviews from phase one to three came to fifty (**50**), excluding those carried out initially in the UK and those on the Subcontinent. (Including the interviews on the Subcontinent and also those done initially in phase one the total comes to seventy-nine).

4.2.2.1. Observation

Observation was considered a useful instrument because it allowed for access to other levels of information. Although observation was originally planned to focus on schools as well as homes (in order to understand constructs of success better), the switch in focus to the communities meant that observation of the communities became a much more important priority.

Values and priorities can be interpreted from both explicit and implicit factors. Explicit displays of cultural priorities for example were expressed in the way in which the house was ordered and the symbols that were on display. These were observed in South Asian homes in the South West inner city UK location and also on the Subcontinent. Cultural priorities could also be recognised through the practices and customs displayed in everyday life. Respondents could convey their values in their conversations. By contrast covert displays of interest and involvement were recognised in for example the time spent discussing the subject or the warmth and spontaneity that it provoked.

The researcher took a participant –observer position as described in the methodology. This meant that she was expected to adapt and change in relation to her experience of the field and interactions with participants as well as to the self-reflections and cultural insights she gained through participation in the field.

4.2.4.3. Researcher notes

Part of the access the researcher gained in schools, homes and communities was through the participant observer approach that she adopted involved sharing concerns and interests with the participants and this entailed explaining her lack of knowledge and desire to know more. The quote below registers the manner in which participant observation is applied within the ethnographic approach and within this particular study: " The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned...[exploring] ...the routine ways that people make sense of their everyday life "(Atkinson and Hammersley,1989: 2). These aims and considerations may not be easily achieved. Within this study the researcher aims to achieve some degree of this awareness through being a participant observer as identified by Walsh (1998).

Furthermore it would appear that participation observation, as Ditton (1977) has suggested, is inevitably unethical. It is inevitable that the researcher will have what Fielding (1982: 96) calls "muddy boots" or Marx calls, "grubby hands". However, some ways to address this inherent concern is to have a clear set of procedures and practices that are written down and carried out. This also entails a metacognitive attentiveness, to be constantly alerted to the ethical responsibilities as they arise, to constantly monitor and appraise proceedings and as

initially suggested to be as clear and direct to participants as possible. The researcher incorporated all these approaches to the best of her ability as can be seen in the excerpts form her diary below.

The researcher also kept a diary of her reflections, encounters, engagements and general experiences; these filled ten A4 notebooks over the two-year of data collection period. An excerpt of her reflections is included below. Appendix six includes an excerpt from her experiences on the Subcontinent because it was during this time that she was able to really explore situations in homes in any depth, as this was her opportunity to live with the families. This was also the time when the researcher was most powerfully affected by her position and contexts.

As the researcher aimed to counter any preconceptions or stereotyping of South Asian cultures in her synthesis and selecting of data it is essential that the researcher reveals her own predispositions and experiences (see Gillborn, 1998; Mirza, 1998; Rakhit, 1998 and Thomas, 1995). These reflections were captured in the researchers own notes. Some of the problems, which had to be resolved by the researcher, are outlined below.

The researcher embarked on this venture with more deficits than assets.

The deficits were:

- No knowledge of Asian cultural heritage;
- No knowledge of any South Asian language;
- No knowledge of living in a South Asian community;
- No known contact with her South Asian roots;
- No South Asian friends;

- No South Asian religious experience.

The assets were:

- Experience of interviewing Asian Muslim 6th form young women in a school;
- Experience of researching the cultural values and beliefs of the Indigenous people of Australia;
- A visit to India twenty years before;
- A desire to understand South Asian communities and cultures;
- A desire to confront issues of prejudice and ignorance towards minority groups and in particular the Muslim population in the UK.

Comments from respondents sometimes prompted reflections of a deep nature. For example early on in the research process an elderly local South Asian community representative told the researcher that as a Black woman politically speaking she was potentially one of the many underprivileged, prejudiced people in society. She also declared that if the researcher failed to recognise this she was dismissing the realities experienced by more rather than fewer women of her appearance living in the UK. This forced the researcher to reflect upon the context in which she was working as well as the ways in which self-identity, circumstance and perspective interact.

It was also important in this case for the researcher to recognise that her own Asian appearance and middle class diction might well have an effect. To overcome this is was necessary for the researcher to spend sometime establishing a rapport with the participants, developing sensitivity to their issues and also learning to respect their possible differences.

the data collection process and issues that developed throughout the process as well as outlining insights relating to methods and methodology gained from the visit to the Subcontinent.

Part One: Methodologies

The ethnographic approach chosen for this study belongs to a qualitative research methodology and this methodology is detailed below. It would have been possible to use a quantitative approach to act as a complement and context for the qualitative. However, for this study the researcher decided not to use a quantitative approach for the reasons given below.

4.1. Choosing between a quantitative and a qualitative approach

Argyle (1992) studying human behaviour from a social psychological approach argues that quantitative laboratory studies lack explanatory power because they underestimate the inventiveness and diversity of human experience. By applying certain scientific methods as a "sieve" by which to create "generalisations" or "objectivity" he suggests that the most interesting and revealing material is lost. Waldrop (1992) in his evaluation of an evolving scientific approach to qualitative methodology acknowledges the interesting and diverse qualities of human exchanges and criticizes the reductionist nature of certain approaches to research. He argues that reductionist knowledge lacks ecological validity. He differentiates between human subjects and other more predictable orderly quantitative systems: "Self organizing adaptive systems which are the qualities of non-static objects are more spontaneous, more disorderly, more alive. In the aim of finding the 'holygrail' of internal validity [researchers] ignore the complexity of external and ecological validity" (p.340). Thus, the potential to actively engage /interact with the participant is missed. Burns (1977)

myself both an insider and outsider. My own identity seemed to be paradoxical at times. The closer I felt to the families I lived with (including my own), the more aware I became of the difference between my identity, behaviour and circumstances in the UK and in the Subcontinent and yet I couldn't deny the importance of either. It would be interesting to consider Stuart Hall's constructs of 'identity' in which he describes identity as something that is multifaceted and changeable in relation to context and time."

This excerpt illustrates the dilemmas experienced as a researcher in terms of her own identity and how these dilemmas influenced her to consider literature on identity that she had not considered before.

Thus through reflection and a desire to understand a community in its own terms the researcher came to recognise another dimension to the research that she would need to investigate.

4. 2. 5. Data Collection – phase one

The fieldwork for this project spanned two years from September 1998 – September 2000. Because of the change in the focus explained earlier it is useful to describe the data collection in three phases, since the change in focus created a change in sample and to some extent approach.

4.2.5.1. Data collection in the communities

It was during this period, in the second phase, that the researcher started to develop a greater awareness of the "insider" approach she needed to take in relation to the section 4.2.4. below and this influenced the third phase from May to July 2000. The first phase comprised two

activities: one a process of gradually getting to know the field and identifying the potential participants and secondly starting to collect data for the first identified research question. Therefore this first year from September 1998 entailed gathering information and access to South Asian social workers, community leaders, parents and pupils in the area. The researcher interviewed the following people from the following local institutions prior to identifying any participants or schools: a member of an anti racism organisation, a social worker at a community centre that focused on educational issues for Black people, a translator at a translation centre, a teacher at an Open Learning centre, individual representatives for five local community centres, a city councillor, and also a tutor for a Muslim supplementary school in the area, two senior lecturers from a local university as well as two senior lecturers from other parts of the UK and a senior research fellow in the migration research unit at the university college London (all these academics specialised in issues for South Asian communities). The total of these interviews came to 16.

At a community level the initial fieldwork entailed attendance at a variety of community cultural and social events. The communities varied in terms of their religious and cultural practices. Although the Pakistani and Bangladeshi centres followed Muslim customs and beliefs their cultural practices and languages differed considerably. The Sikh centred differed in terms of its faith and other centres varied in terms of their focus. For instance one centre run by a Sikh focused on domestic violence. There were also two Sikh temples and two Mosques in the area. However, despite this diversity the area itself was quite small encompassing only a few streets within an inner city area. During this first year the researcher identified an initial group of representatives from her attendance at the various community centres; this identification was the result of suggestions, recommendations and recognition of key positions in the community held by particular people who were expected to be able to

represent "community" thoughts and also articulate them clearly. These initial representatives were interviewed within this first year (and five of these interviewees later became final interviewees).

4.2.6.2. Data Collection in the schools

In terms of researching the educational context procedures entailed identifying which schools would be most appropriate by contacting a variety of people both in the city council and among the local practitioners, accessing schools, meeting head teachers and teachers and also carrying out a pilot in one of the schools. This pilot involved observation and participation in the classroom for one day a week for a term so that the researcher could become familiar with the curriculum and situation for year six children and teachers in a primary school (as appropriate for the first research questions).

Two interviews and a visit, to gradually build up rapport were arranged with families linked to the school. These interviews followed on from the initial interviews with community representatives, which like the experience in the pilot school helped the researcher to understand the concerns and dispositions of her participants in advance.
From these families four people were eventually identified to be final interviewees.

4. 2.5.3. Pilot school and pilot procedures

The pilot school and the main school were both in the heart of the community.

The pilot school of three hundred and forty five pupils was chosen as it had South Asian parents, though not as many Bangladeshi children as the main school had, as well as a South Asian teacher. The Ofsted report for this school noted that it had good pastoral care and some

individual high attainment but in general was low in attainment, though not as low as the main school.

The reason for using a pilot school was to help the researcher to become more informed about the curriculum and general classroom situation. This also enabled her to be more aware of the general classroom issues so that when she worked in the main school she could focus more on the particular concerns of the South Asian pupils and understand the first research question better. This experience also enabled the researcher to be helpful and involved with the situation and less of an outsider. The pilot study of this school did not involve interviews with the pupils but rather the researcher's involvement with a combined class of year six and five pupils, of approximately twenty five pupils (pupils came a went from the school during the year), as an observer and to a limited degree an assistant in lessons one day a week for the summer term of 1999.

The experience of the pilot school drew the researcher's attention to the project work in the afternoons that offered a more relaxed opportunity to work with the children. She also saw that it would be necessary to somehow find opportunities to work with the South Asian pupils in particular to build up a rapport for the interview. These issues including others related to pedagogic practices, the school timetable and national curriculum content helped with understanding of the school context better, although ultimately this became less important than understanding this communities better.

The researcher did do a pilot interview with the class teacher in the pilot school. However as this interview took place in the school after the last class two, problems arose: there were several interruptions and also the teacher was tired. Because of these problems the interview

was not transcribed or used. However, as the initial interview with the teacher in this pilot school had potential she decided to interview this teacher again though this time at home the following year. This proved to be a much more relaxed and informative occasion. She also changed the questions she had originally asked this teacher due to the changes in the focus of the project that had occurred over the year as explained in the following section.

In phase one (Sept 1998 - August 1999) The thirteen community representatives were interviewed and in addition several untranscribed interviews were carried out. The pilot interview with the teacher in the pilot school was also carried out and sixteen other interviews with a mixture of social workers and members of the wider South Asian communities based in some of the centres and schools and academics for orientation purposes. Thus thirteen **(13)** key interviews were completed in this phase.

4.2.6. Data collection - phase two

For the whole of the academic year, from September 1999 to July 2000, which spans phases two and three the researcher attended this main primary school once a week and worked with the teacher and class of approximately twenty-five of year six pupils on various projects. She offered classroom assistance for the curriculum subjects and also initiated an Arts and cultural studies session. Participatory activities in the classroom helped the researcher to build a rapport with the pupils from which she selected the four South Asian pupil groups to interview as mentioned earlier. This involvement also helped to establish a good relationship with the teacher whom she interviewed once in the school and the second time in the teacher's home.

This phase started during October 1999, shortly after the researcher had begun to work in the main school and included the visit to the Subcontinent from November 1999 to January 2000 (this consisted of seven weeks living with families in both India and Bangladesh and interviewing academics and teachers. During this time the researcher interviewed seven teachers, six academics once each and kept records of discussions and observations of living with three families out there). Thus twenty-two (22) key interviews were carried out. Two sets of interviews with eleven families were carried out.

4.2.6.1. Including a visit to the Subcontinent

Insights from the visit to the Subcontinent contributed to the fieldwork in the UK communities in several ways. It became clear that the researcher should incorporate a voyage to the Subcontinent to ensure a more thorough understanding of the values and beliefs of her participants. The suggestion to visit India was prompted by several social workers, practioners and community members. They considered that it was vital that the researcher had some awareness of the circumstances they return to when they visit India, not least the educational system and environment that draws them back there. It was most important to understand the reasons for their attachment, their beliefs and practices and they also considered it important for the researcher to acknowledge their link with her through their shared origins. This visit heralded a dramatic change from the initial focus upon the school, national curriculum and achievement/success. The communities became the prime focus; their complexity demanded greater in-depth understanding and attention than had been initially recognised in the research. The focus on a particular stage of the National Curriculum had been withdrawn and replaced by priorities, which emerged from the data.

The visit to the Subcontinent involved living in Dhaka, Sylhet, Calcutta, Delhi, Chandigar and Amritzar. It entailed living with families, visiting academics and teachers, accessing libraries, bookshops and places of importance for the participants of this study such as the Golden Temple and other shrines. The fieldwork on the Subcontinent explored not only the beliefs but also the ways in which people lived their lives, their customs and behaviour. It was important that the researcher was aware of the issues that these participants in the Subcontinent faced in order to ask the right questions of her participants in the UK. However the researcher understood that she could not entirely anticipate in what ways this additional work would enrich her understanding. She was aware though that it was crucial that the researcher demonstrated her own credibility by her willingness to participate to some degree in the participants' ways of life and to acknowledge some of their values and beliefs actively i.e. by visiting the Subcontinent.

The data analysis used for the research focuses upon the material gleaned from interviews and experiences collected in the UK communities. However, as the participants were all closely connected to families, customs and beliefs that were maintained on the Subcontinent it is interesting see how the participants were able to provide the researcher with reliable and relevant gatekeepers, contacts to aid this UK research.

4.2.6.2. Interviewing the families and the teacher

On returning to the UK the second set of interviews with the families was carried out, including an in-depth study extracted from material from contact with one of the Bangladeshi families. The pilot interview with the teacher in the main school was also carried out. This pilot, like the pilot with the pilot teacher was also unsuccessful for similar reasons: it took place after school, in the school grounds when the teacher was tired and there were several

disruptions. Therefore this pilot was not transcribed successfully and is not included. However, both these pilots (from phase one and phase two) were useful in building a rapport between the researcher and teachers, allowing the second interviews to be more relaxed and focused. Details of the work in the main school are included in the third phase although several of the changes detailed below began to affect the approach, such as the questions asked in interviews and selection of participants.

4.2.6.8. The changes in the research

Initially the study had sought to identify the, "constructs of success" for the teachers and communities. However it became apparent that success was a very western concept and one which is predominant in educational jargon and literature; it turned out to be not very easy for participants to define or discuss this concept in terms of their particular beliefs and practices. Topics relating to school were difficult to discuss as the parents interviewed tended to have a lack of knowledge of what went on in the school and were in general intimidated by questions around the school curriculum and ideology. Their main knowledge and insights were about the learning they provided in their homes outside the school and in the communities. Their beliefs and values became key to understanding their constructs. One articulate community representative used the word "fulfilment" as a translation for her community's ideals; however, even then she had to add provisos to incorporate a group rather than individual sense. Also the researcher became aware that there were more important issues that summed up the whole situation between the school and community. As time passed the researcher became acutely aware of the different exclusive territories belonging to the following: i) the school and ii) South Asian communities in general and iii) between the different cultural and religious groups. This also represented a change from an outsider's stance, which had assumed a non partisan approach, to one of tackling misconceptions about

unequal partnership in the home/school relationship, recognising the problems and re-evaluating the constitution and qualities of this home situation.

The researcher became aware that her initial approach could be identified as an outsider's methodology being school-based, and as she gained greater insight into the communities' contexts, it became more helpful to adopt a community-based rather than school based approach. Miles and Huberman (1994) note that one way to pre-empt making too rapid a cause/effect judgement before there is clear connection between the two, is to check out: "rival explanations, ruling out spurious relations, or using extreme cases." (p.258). This change also heralded a dramatic change in the researcher's awareness of the school/home relationship. The criteria for selecting certain participants was no longer in terms of their relationship with the main school but rather whether the representatives reflected the range of perspectives in the communities.

Therefore, once the researcher had discovered who was who in terms of who the communities' respected she then interviewed families specifically on the subject of their religious and cultural knowledge as well as their experiences of living in the UK. This was not only useful in terms of developing the researcher's knowledge but also helped to build a rapport and reputation among the community members as they soon realised that she was a novice and they were experts and therefore became eager to teach her about their cultural and religious beliefs to address the failings of her parents, who in their minds had obviated their responsibility to disseminate this knowledge.

4.2.7.The Third Phase

In this phase the South Asian pupils from all the three communities were interviewed in groups and finally key spokespeople, members and radicals were identified and interviewed. All the final interviewees had already been interviewed either as community representatives or as parents in the family visits. The data analysis combines data from these sources.

In phase three (May -July 2000):

One preparatory group interview with the pupils was carried out, followed by the rest of the three pupil group interviews. The nine interviewee interviews were carried out and also the two teachers were interviewed. Therefore fifteen **(15)** key interviews were carried out.

The third phase thus focuses upon:

- The preparatory interview with the pupils;
- Group interviews with the pupils;
- Interviews with the teachers;
- Interviews with the final interviewees, of which one, the radical Sikh is represented as an in-depth study.

4.2.7.1. Group interviews and work with the pupils

The researcher carried out a preparatory group interview with one group of Pakistani/Bangladeshi. All the pupils were interviewed in groups for two reasons: first to ensure they felt confident being in the majority and, two so that they could encourage each other to share and develop ideas together. During this interview the researcher discovered that there were clear cultural differences and affiliations between the two Muslim groups. Consequently the main group interviews were designed to group pupils from the same cultural and religious background Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Sikh). The initial interview

with the pupils is included in the analysis because it was as equally revealing and successful in that the pupils were very forthcoming and articulate about their cultural beliefs, practices and also their involvement with the school. This preparatory interview was helpful because it revealed that the pupils were eager to inform the researcher about their religious beliefs and practices as well as the differences between their cultural heritage and experience. Therefore the researcher felt confident to pursue the same questions with her main separate Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Sikh groups of pupils.

4.2.7.2. Interview with main and pilot school teachers

The teacher in the main school was interviewed at her home, after the pilot had been unsuccessful as noted above. There were also changes to the questions asked in this second interview. The changes meant that the focus of the interview was no longer on the National Curriculum at Key stage two in literacy but rather in relation to South Asian parent/school relationships, Ofsted reports and general issues related to what the teacher wanted to offer her pupils. The teacher in the pilot school was interviewed again in the second year this time more successfully with the new questions and in her own home, and this interview has also been analysed.

4.2.7.3.The group of nine final interviewees

Through phase one and two the researcher identified two separate factors that helped to understand the diverse range of responses the participants expressed and to allow for the selection of the final interviewees.

First was their relationship to their communities, the position they took in relation their communities' practices and beliefs and second was a wide range of attitudes between and within groups.

Purposive sampling (Cohen and Manion, 1989) was used to identify those participants considered to be most useful as the final interviewees. One dimension to the choice of respondents was the need for articulate and knowledgeable members who were able to discuss and register the existence of change and cultural conflict that had become so pertinent in the study. Willis (1977) notes the usefulness of articulate interviewees. "[Joey] a lad of considerable insight and expressive power. In a way this might disqualify him as typical of school non-conformist working class lads. However, although Joey may not be *typical* of working class lads, he is certainly representative of them. (p.16)." The researcher identified three different types of interviewees from within each different ethnic group. This range of participants helps to convey the breadth and diversity of views. Miles and Huberman (1994) for example recommend that the researcher should aim to elicit not only the typical representatives of a group but also the deviants to gather a more comprehensive and accurate perception of the group.

The three representatives chosen for each ethnic group (Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sikh) were as follows:

Spokesperson (known worker in a community base – identifiable as such);

Member (not in the position of spokesperson but articulate member);

Radical (someone who is prepared to speak independently of the community).

(Thus nine in total).

The spokesperson was an officially nominated representative of a community(i.e. by common consent of those spoken to in the local area), who registered the positive and negative aspects of life in the communities but also took responsibility for dealing with issues and difficulties as they arose, displaying a element of pragmatism and determination to find solutions and to articulate on behalf of the particular community she represented. By contrast the member expressed loyalty and affiliation with the community s/he belonged to but was inclined to express a more passive concern about problematic issues. The radicals like the members, voiced the concerns and the limitations of the communities but were able to assert their own way of tackling problems independently of the community, invariably relying upon other resources sometimes outside the community, sometimes in their own family as opposed to the community and most conspicuously relying upon themselves.

4.2.7.4. A further layer of analysis

It was not only useful to take key voices in the three ethnic communities, it also became clear that some other way of registering the breadth and mobile nature of responses. The three differing perspectives within each community did not convey the ways in which participants were addressing the problems and difficulties they experienced in relation to the wider UK society, and therefore also the school as a British institution. These more complex responses are captured in the modes of response which overarch the other categories adopted are explained in more detail below.

4.2.8.Coding of participants

None of the participants have had their names substituted with an alternative name. This was done for the purpose of ensuring representation and not just to ensure anonymity. The coding was specifically designed to register the variation of perspectives in each community rather than indiscriminate community membership. Therefore the final nine interviewees represent not only their particular views and knowledge but have been carefully selected to represent different elements in their communities. One important feature of the communities that the researcher discovered in the field was the diversity within and between the South Asian communities and yet their particular, distinctive characteristics. The participants have letters and numbers, not names to identify them. All the Bangladeshi participants have the letter 'B' as part of their identity; all the Pakistani participants the letter 'P'; and all the Sikh participants the letter 'S' and the numbers 1 as spokesperson, 2 as member, and 3 as radical as identified above.

The pupils are identified by the letter C and given numbers: 1-5 (B) for the Bangladeshi participants and 6-9 for the Pakistani pupils followed by (P) in brackets and the Sikh pupils are given the numbers 10-12 followed by (S) in brackets. The use of letters in brackets to denote their cultural group has been used to clarify the fact that the pupils have no relationship to the final interviewees (spokespeople, members and radicals above). In the quoted sections of the transcribed interviews it should also be noted that "S" on its own refers to the researcher.

4.2.9. Categorising the data

The participant observer approach, the emancipatory model and the data driven approach that the researcher adopted all drive the data collection method and analytical process. As Miles and Huberman (1994) argue the strength of the qualitative, grounded approach is that it has a: " strong handle on what 'real life' is like...the influences of the local context are not stripped away but taken into account ...[and that this emphasis on people's lived experience] is well suited for locating *meanings* people place on the events, processes, and structures in their lives: their "perceptions, assumptions, prejudgements, presuppositions" (van Manen, 1977) and for connecting these meanings to the *social world* around them." (p.10 emphasis in the original). This overall approach complements the ethical, social and political issues that the researcher has already investigated which are discussed in chapters two and three in particular the need to raise the voices of the marginalized and under represented in the home/school relationship and understand them better from their own perspectives. This combined approach also addresses the concerns that Argyle (1992) and Waldrop (1992) raise when internal validity, generalisations and various reductionist approaches fail to achieve ecological validity as noted in part one.

There was a clear process in terms of the data analysis that started after the first interviews and observations took place. This process validates the way in which the representatives and modes developed out of the data. The researcher analysed material and in relation to what she uncovered and developed, she adapted her ways of thinking about categories (as well as the changes in focus and sample noted above) as the fieldwork progressed. This proved to be an iterative process: an analysis of a set of interviews, prompted more questions and set in motion the process of backward mapping, sending the researcher to the Subcontinent and ultimately influencing her return to the key participants she had initially identified to ensure

validity and explore the issues that kept reoccurring in greater depths. As Miles and Huberman (1994) note data reduction is synonymous with data collection: " writing summaries, coding, teasing out themes, making clusters, making partitions, writing memos." (p.10). In this fieldwork five stages developed: First, general summaries were made to identify the participants' key priorities; second, further interview schedules were developed and a list of themes and sub-themes that arose out of these interviews (e.g. sacred spaces, the importance and power of the community) were identified. The same process was carried out for pupil interviews and these introduced different headings; third, transcripts were compared to identify different and similar emphasis and qualities, this analysis influenced the researcher to identify the three different representatives for each group, in particular the difference between a radical and member position; fourth, interviews were analysed in terms of the way tensions and difficulties were realised and addressed and this resulted in the development of the fifth stage which identified three modes of response. In relation to this development Miles and Huberman (1994) helpfully clarify how the use of metaphor can help to crystallise the way a group of perspectives cluster. It is another way of data reduction. In this instance the names of the modes capture the mood of a particular attitude i.e. the reaffirming response, the contradictory response and the dynamic response. It is important to note that this extra layer of identification spans respondents. It is not a case of each person representing one set of general attitudes and responses but rather that the range of responses overarches the pupil groups, the three ethnic groups and the three different kinds of respondents identified in each group, although interestingly there are some loose overall affiliations. This coding is helpful because it shows the mobility of attitudes.

4.2.10. Validating the data

We have already discussed the need for qualitative data to address problems of bias by ensuring authenticity and trustworthiness as identified by Denzin and Lincoln (1994), which the researcher applied to this study. Furthermore the researcher also avoided bias, stemming from the effects of the site in the way that Miles and Huberman (1994) identify. She included a spread of informants, she spent time away from the site to avoid co-optation, she included dissidents (these were represented by the radicals), she reconceptualised and translated sentimental or interpersonal thoughts through the process as registered above and she returned to outsiders who were specialists living outside the locality to ask their insight into the history and issues that developed.

Another way to ensure validity is the use of triangulation. An awareness of the key value of triangulation occurred during the data collection process; it was not set up initially. Triangulation was provided by including views of the parents, pupils, teachers and from deliberately chosen different representatives.

4.2.11.Conclusion

It has been important to describe the methodology and three phases at length because of the methodology adopted. Revelations that the researcher encountered once she entered the field were the motive for the changes in this research and influenced the complicated changes in design, including changes to the selection of participants, changes to the process, focus and general research aims that were uncovered in the second phase and applied in phase three.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS

5.0.We have already seen in chapter four that the researcher made several adaptations to the original conceptual framework and focus of the thesis in response to the issues that arose as she started to work in the field. To clarify this progressive change the fieldwork was divided into three phases. This chapter draws upon material from all the three phases but generally concentrates on material from the third phase when the final interviewees, pupils and teachers were interviewed. However phases one and two provided essential foundations of knowledge for the researcher and were crucial in terms of identifying where to place the focus of this research and who to focus upon to answer the research question.

This analysis does not include two sets of peripheral but important interviews: neither the initial interviews carried out right at the beginning of the fieldwork when the researcher was gathering important information about issues relating to these communities, nor the interviews carried out on the Subcontinent although these interviews were central to understanding the field. The interviews from the Subcontinent are included in appendix six.

This first section of chapter five is subdivided into three parts: first, identifying key themes, the second analyses the teachers' views and, third the three responses which South Asian participants expressed in relation to both their own priorities and also in terms of their degree of engagement with the wider society within which " school" is located.

5.1. Original themes and issues

During the first phase of the fieldwork when the researcher circulated within the community (as described earlier) the following themes and issues were identified.

- There were tensions between the African Caribbeans and South Asians.
- The council tended to house refugees in this area.
- As it was a poor inner-city area, richer Asians moved out of the area once they prospered.

This overall description was endorsed by the 1981, 1991 later 2001 census.

The 1981and 1991 census shows an increase in unemployment in this predominately working class community. It also registers that this area has a high proportion of lone parents and correspondingly a large quantity of children eligible for free school meals. In terms of indicators of material deprivation it also has few car owners per household; households with fewer rooms than persons, some households with their electricity disconnected and, some households lacking exclusive use of the bath/WC.

- There is considerable diversity between and within communities.
- Customs and practices are as important as thoughts and verbal communication; it was essential for the researcher to understand the way people lived their lives: interviewing was not enough.
- Islamic practices can make life more ritualised for community members than for Hindus or Sikhs.
- Women in the communities can be isolated.
- Visits to the Subcontinent provide a wealth of positive cultural/family, identity and experience for those children who could go there.
- Children could lead double lives; parents may be unaware of the issues that confronted their children.
- There could be conflicts of interests between the generations.

- Language problems exist for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women although less for Sikh women.
- South Asian parents have little to do with the schools in terms of their attendance at PTA meetings.
- Uneducated parents are the ones who do not understand that lack of attendance at school due to visits to the Subcontinent and lack of communication with the schools affects their children's chances at school.

These issues prompted the researcher to find a means of analysis that acknowledged the diversity in the community. They also influenced the themes that were chosen in the interviews e.g. visits to the Subcontinent and raised the notion of identity for the children and the need to further examine the different lives that the children led at home and school. Again these issues made it essential for the researcher to understand more fully why the families took their children abroad despite the inevitable cost and organisation it entailed and also why it was crucial to access the families through the communities rather than the school to get beyond the schools' limitations and understand the complexity of the communities.

5.1.2. Decisions about focus: identifying the priorities in the participants' lives

Three priorities were further identified in phases one and two: 1) South Asian identity, 2) cultural knowledge and focus on the family, and 3) religion. By comparison, other areas of concern such as school education and perceptions of western culture did not gather much affirmative response at all. However, as mentioned earlier the school issues did raise concern and a number of problems to be addressed. To understand these problems and concerns it was necessary to have a much greater insight into the essential values and beliefs that the participants held. The researcher drew upon the process of "backward mapping" i.e. going

back to the source of interest before she went forward to understand the cross-cultural situation.

South Asian identity, was gradually developed as a key priority. Initially it was prompted by the participants' interest in the researcher's identity and also the insistence, that all the participants voiced, that the researcher needed to visit her family connections on the Subcontinent to understand their values and beliefs. This priority also affected participants very differently across generations, religious and cultural groupings. In particular this priority also became key to identifying the range of responses and therefore the three modes. It was clear that the priority of claiming a South Asian identity was a conscious way in which the communities then evaluated the wider UK society, often responding to the wider society's response to them.

In phase one the general community issues were reduced to two main further priorities, namely cultural and religious practices. Customs and practices were seen to be as important as verbal communication, and these second two priorities were gleaned through explicit or visible and implicit behaviour and comment as mentioned earlier.

The second two priorities also became part of the interview schedules in informal as well as formal interviews. However, through the interview process it also became clear that there were a series of problems and difficulties the participants experienced relating to their experiences of living in a secular society and also having values which differed with UK cultural values. This added a further dimension to the priorities identified by the communities and helped to formulate the new research questions, namely; what are the views of the South

Asian communities of the home/school divide? What are the cultural and social values in South Asian communities that inhibit or promote communication with the school?

The differences in responses led to the two sets of categories described earlier: the three different representatives interviewed in each group and the three modes of response, which spanned both interviewees and ethnic groups.

5.1.3.Organisation of the data analysis: from phase one to phases two and three

The change in the research design and question have already been noted namely a change from a school-based focus (achievement/success) to one which focused more on the communities.

However, it was still important to gather what the school perspective might be in relation to the home/school divide and then to evaluate whether there was any connection between what the teachers and parents had to say. Their perspectives are analysed first to establish the issues that they, as experienced teachers, consider important: to establish what gaps and concerns exist from the school perspective and then to compare this where appropriate with what the communities had to say (This is not done at any length since the main focus is on the communities' perspective). It seemed probable that teachers of South Asian origin themselves would be most able to shed light upon the relationship between South Asian parents and the school, and the researcher was fortunate to be able to access two South Asian teachers who were responsible for teaching year six, the year with whom she was undertaking her fieldwork.

5.2. The teachers' perspectives

The analysis below identifies the following themes that arose out of the interviews with these teachers: 1) Aims for pupils, 2) attitudes to doing well academically, 3)reasons for differences in attitudes, 4) broader general differences with parents, 5) broader differences in general for pupils, 6) contact with parents, 7) other issues including the National Curriculum and Ofsted.

Each teacher's view are presented under these headings. First there is an introduction to each teacher:

TEACHER M

Teacher in the main school

This teacher lives outside the school's locality and therefore does not live among the communities but was brought up in South Asia. She is conversant with the values and beliefs as well as life- styles of the families in the community although in several ways she differs in her opinion from the "general community". She sees herself as more western. She is of a different religion, neither Muslim not Sikh but Hindu. However, she also sees herself as a non-believer but is glad that her religion has a place for people like herself as well. Nonetheless when she talked about South Asian culture she used the word "our" revealing her affiliation with South Asian cultures. She also respected religion and recognised its importance but was concerned about the fundamentalism in the community that she saw as dangerously fanatical and full of indoctrination. The general stance of teacher could be summarised as follows:

M: I've probably grown up within the western educational system and I have western views... There are lots of questions that I have no answers to. Questions like death and life and God.

TEACHER X

This teacher came from the Pilot school.

This teacher also lived outside the area. She was bought up on an island in the Pacific in a small family unit that lived separately from others on the island and her parents were not religious. She did not experience the extended family set-up, but her parents did have some similar values to South Asian communities, which she disagreed with. She was sensitive to the issues of equal opportunity in general, and critical of the ways in which the National Curriculum inhibited her from addressing the importance of the life skills that she felt her particular children required. She understood that the children came from an inner city area and faced various disadvantages as a consequence. However, she expressed a sense of frustration towards the Asian communities because although she was of Asian origin herself she had never been part of a close knit community and most importantly remained unimpressed with its insularity.

Although this teacher expressed similar tensions to those of teacher M above, unlike teacher M she could not affiliate with the South Asian communities and their religious values and beliefs:

X: I feel very different to the Asian community. I don't feel part of the Asian community- I don't feel I'm welcomed as part of the Asian community...Because of

being brought up in a really small family unit with no extended family; that's the frame of reference that I had and not overly religious.

5.2.1. Aims for pupils

The ideals as a teacher M has and what she would like to offer her pupils were described thus:

M: Taking it quite literally I'd like them to have a sound foundation in the 3 'R's- hoping they'll do better academically and settle into professions they want to do. I want them to do well academically but more importantly I want them to have the right values. I want them to have a really good sense of discrimination and to be able to understand the difference between right and wrong... to be able to make choices. And I want them to be proud of who they are because a lot of our children come from the ethnic groups. I want them to have a clear sense of identity; I want them to be proud of their background and who they are. I want them to have self-confidence about themselves, about what they are.

This desire to help the pupils to develop a pride in their identity and background, as well as her desire for them to do well academically gave her strong links with the ideals of the South Asian parents which are analysed later in this chapter. However the issue of moral education may be an area of contention between herself and the parents.

M: I want my children at school to be open minded, more tolerant...I think when I'm talking about the Muslim religion ... to me it's almost a sort of brain washing style.

Children blindly follow things, without questioning, without looking at things at a deeper level.

Teacher M was suspicious of the fanatical elements in Islam and anticipated that some of the parents would have such an outlook.

The ideals that Teacher X has as a teacher and what she would like to offer her pupils were described thus:

X: I want to give them [her pupils] a sense of independence and be able to get on by themselves and use the knowledge and skills that they've got and apply them to various situations that they are going to come across in their lives; to give them loads of advice and practical information. Not just focusing on the core subjects, although I know that teaching now is all numeracy and all literacy and that's fine, but it doesn't help the children with life skills; to get on with other people and communicate effectively with each other. And I think my role as a teacher is to help them communicate their ideas and feelings and aspirations, to get what they want in a co-operative way. Especially in a school like ... where competitiveness is avoided because of the nature of the children themselves.

To summarise in relation to the aims for their pupils, teacher X focused on independence and the ability to communicate in relation to ethnic minority and economic disadvantages that her pupils faced in general. By contrast teacher M combined moral values with ethnic pride and confidence in terms of personal, community and academic values as aims for her pupils. In

this respect Teacher M's aims are closer to South Asian parents' interests as the modes clarify.

5.2.2.Cultural differences

Teacher M did recognise the cultural needs of her pupils and attempted to incorporate them into the timetable:

M: English, English is predominantly British but we also do a lot of non-standard English. We sometimes deal with word order and bring in other languages, especially the languages the children bring with them – just to heighten their interest in languages and grammars. We naturally do our best rather then a conscious effort to make it a multicultural education. The students themselves come from such different places that we do try to incorporate cultures from different parts of the world.

She also felt that their cultural background was an asset:

M: I'd like them to know about our culture because in that way India has a lot to offer. In that way I'd like them to know more about our culture, more about our history and more about our religion. I come from the Hindu religion and although I'm not being extremist *(she says with a laugh in her voice)* I must admit it's a very tolerant religion, open-minded religion. It has a place for non-believers like me *(she laughs and so do I).*

By contrast teacher X did not voice an awareness of the cultural needs of her South Asian pupils.

5.2.3. Attitudes to doing well academically.

One of the areas where there appeared to be a sense of divide with the parents was in the different attitudes to education and their feelings about tests. Teacher M felt that these different values related to a lack of understanding on the part of the parents and parents' emphasis on just getting things done:

M: I don't think South Asian parents especially those living in ...are aware of the education system here, nor the one that they've come from and there too they have a very shallow knowledge of the systems there. To them, doing well means doing well academically with their reading, writing and maths. So if you say your child shows a lot of flair in dance and music they're not as pleased as if you say she's exceptionally good at maths – then they feel really good about it. I think they're [the parents] quite happy to see their children get homework ...they don't consider reading a book as homework or listening to the news and jotting down notes as homework. They want a formal set piece of paper and ...they keep asking; can you send more homework? So they're ready to support with that – just ensuring ...that the child does that.

Teacher M felt the parents' identification with the importance of tests was another area in which they did not agree:

M: Most of the parents aren't aware of things and as they come from a culture where tests are OK so they think that their children come to school to learn Maths, English and Science and to improve their chance at tests.

However we will see that teacher M showed empathy with the parents' concerns, in this instance she understood that their differences were also related to different ways of thinking and a lack of questioning:

M: I think a lot of our South Asian cultures don't develop the habit of questioning among individuals. It's always accepting what you receive, not questioning things. I think that is the big difference I find between eastern and western education. In the West you're taught to question all the time.

Teacher X understood that South Asian parents were primarily interested in tests and exam results and she disagreed with this focus;

X: As a teacher the overriding impression you get is that they don't really care about day to day things and but what they do care about is what marks did my child get in his tests.

This created a conflict with the South Asian communities for her:

X: I think they are relatively happy with the testing and they want their children to do well in the tests. Because you find that they are the parents who are happy to get in extra tuition and make sure their children go to homework club or whatever because I think they put a certain value on passing exams.

S: What about things like the Arts?

X: I don't think that there is much concern for the Arts.

During the time the researcher visited this teacher's classroom she became conscious of the teacher's enthusiasm for the arts and this was clearly a different focus from what she anticipated the parents' focus would be.

In relation to attitudes to academic achievement the teachers shared similar views and expressed a difference from what they envisaged were South Asian parents' attitudes to the Arts. Again though there seems a slightly more negative view of difference/disjuncture from Teacher X, and more empathy demonstrated by teacher M.

5.2.4. Broader general differences with parents

Despite her reservations about the parents' interests teacher M was able to anticipate what the parents would want to know if they did go to PTA meetings:

M: [They want] a broad general statement about how they're doing work-wise and behaviour-wise.

However, there were more general ways that she identified different attitudes from the parents. Her inside knowledge made her aware of the reasons behind some of their responses. She was also aware of parents' problems because of western culture possibly taking over their children's value systems. This teacher did understand why any individual community stuck together as shown in the following interview extract:

M: I think parents are quite scared that their children are going to go to the other extreme and become completely anglicised in their way of life and therefore they're hanging on to the old way of life and culture from back home. So therefore are pulling in that direction just to stop the children from becoming too westernised.

This insight also made her understanding of why the communities tended to stay together:

M: I think this sense of belonging becomes all the more intense because you know that otherwise you get isolated in a foreign land – so you stick together.

However, this teacher had chosen not to live herself in a close community, and though she was understanding she also expressed strong reservations about the ways in which the communities controlled their children. She was concerned that this intense focus on belonging together also influenced the parents to try and hold too tight a rein on their children, which could have a detrimental effect:

M: I'd say most parents do train their children into what is right and wrong because it's just part of our lives and it just happens at home. But there is such a strong influence of society of the outside world around them –so that the moment the children get away from their parental constraints, they try to follow the examples of their White and other friends and the behaviour outside school can be appalling.

Furthermore, teacher M felt that pressures on the children were intensified because they were expected to attend lessons at the Mosque after school: M: "A lot of the children spend at least a couple of hours at the Mosque after they leave school. They do their prayers everyday and

their whole life revolves around their religion; it does play a big part in their lives. " Teacher M therefore anticipated that the pupils would be different to other pupils because of the pressures upon them.

Teacher X did not identify with the interests and concerns of the South Asian parents in the same way and in general clearly separated herself from them:

X: If the Asian community was a bit more open it might be easier for people to get a better understanding...it's very insular, [the community] it's very small and it's very unwelcoming...It really does seem to be very, very religious based and people will give children the opportunity to spend a lot of time out of school to do Arabic exams – to do – that and they don't seem to attach much value to the state education system...[It is] not valued as much as, as the education they are ...giving their children when they go to India or when they go to Pakistan, ...you find it is only the Asian parents that are withdrawing their children for that period of time. On the one hand they want their children to do really, really well. They want their children to get 'A' grades and to go to universities; they want their children to be professionals and at the same time they're not prepared to put the input in themselves. The input comes from older siblings who have been through the educational system.

This teacher felt that the South Asian parents wanted their children to do well but that they were not sufficiently responsible about it. In this aspect of understanding there was considerable difference between the two teachers.

5.2. 5. Broader differences in general for South Asian pupils

Teacher M was conscious that the South Asian parents' anxieties influenced their children to behave differently. When questioned about the effectiveness of the parents' close rein on their children, her response was:

M: No, completely opposite effect on things. I think the minute the children are away from home they are rebelling. I see lots of Asian girls, or rather Gujarati girls because I come from the Gujarat community. I see lots of Gujarati girls going with boys from a completely different race and culture and it's probably their way of rebelling against what is happening at home.

This insight related to the situation for Muslim girls as well:

M: I've known quite a few girls who have veils on and are wonderfully devout Muslims and once they're out they behave completely differently. It's their way of rebelling against the constraints that are imposed on them at home...I hope this is not too damning? I'm taking the point you've just made and I am aware that many of our Muslim children are very, very Muslim almost to the point of extremism. If somebody were to say something that was in any way anti-Muslim they would be prepared to kill that person...I'm not suggesting to them that they should forget about their religion. I think religion is a wonderful thing if you can believe in it. But to believe in it so much that that you believe everything else is trash is not right.

Despite this teacher's fears and concerns she also had insight into the pressures of living in a cross-cultural situation and was therefore aware of problems for her pupils:

M: Yes it's a really tricky balance between things. On the one hand you're saying you should have your self identity and your individuality and on the other you're saying you need to be self- effacing and blend into the family structure; which may be a really extended family. I think there is a very big difference between eastern and western values and I don't know what happy balance you can strike.

By contrast teacher X focused upon the social and economic factors that disadvantaged South Asian children and tended to ghettoise them in certain areas:

X: The Asian children are seen as separate and it's the age-old thing that you run the shops and are segregated...when you look at the housing and see how housing is arranged it is very distinct. You know like very near the school a lot of White children live and a bit further away is where the majority of Asian people live. So you look at how they're spaced out.

However, despite her criticisms of the parents she was sympathetic to what she felt their children had to endure. She respected their endeavours but ultimately saw their problems as no different from other children's:

X: Yes – they work hard when they're in school, dedicated and they're focused and then also again when they go home. And they see it – I don't know but I presume that they see it as two very separate things that don't mingle with each other and school is one thing and home is another thing. And it's like that for a lot of children and it doesn't matter about their cultural background.

Despite X's awareness of equal opportunities and issues that may confront ethnic minority children, unlike teacher M, she didn't seem to realise how important and different a South Asian identity might be. She expressed surprise at their interest in their specific cultural identity when she discussed India with the class:

X: It's funny you know because we did a topic on India, and all the South Asian children wanted to talk about was not India. India had absolutely no relevance at all. What they wanted to talk about was the Punjab and Pakistan. There were political issues to do with when Pakistan was first born. The one thing that a couple of Asian Sikh children in my class were really interested in was the Temple at Amritsar...the political issues to do with the British leaving ...I think the main focus is religion.

However, when the interviewer pressed her about why she felt the pupils may have reacted in this way she did express an understanding:

X: To not forget where they come from and to not forget about their religious roots...because I think people feel that they need the support of their own communities.

In terms of the broader differences between South Asian pupils and other pupils, teacher X focused on the socio-economic factors and teacher M on cross-cultural factors. Teacher X also included South Asian pupils in with other groups of children who may experience difficulties.

5.2.6. Contact with parents

Teacher M expressed her disappointment and sense of powerlessness in terms of her attempts to access South Asian parent. She understood that the parents' lack of questioning and different expectations of their roles affected their involvement with the school:

M: Even if they don't understand. They don't question the system; they think the school is supposed to know what they're doing so we'll agree with everything they're saying. ...I don't expect any parents to turn up [to parents' evenings] ...I think much of it may be because they've got other younger siblings at home to look after, or a father-in-law or mother-in-law, so it's all the household chores, and there is no time to go and sit with your child. What you want is your child to be at school, so that you can get on with the other things you have got to do.

However as a parent herself, but for different reasons, the teacher understands the difficulty in getting to PTAs:

M: I don't have a minute – I don't even make it to parents' evening.

Nonetheless as a teacher she clearly felt frustrated by government expectations and her situation:

M: I'll tell you about my experience (*laughs).* Recently because of the government dictates, the school and parents had to sign a contract and that was to be done on parents' evening. And most of the parents that turned up were White parents and a couple of Bangladeshi parents and one Pakistani. It's supposed to be an agreement

between the school and the parents/community and the parents have to say how they can contribute to their children's education and hardly any of the South Asian parents ever returned their forms. They never turn up for parents' evenings so you can never discuss things with them and when you discuss you're never quite sure if it is getting through; or they are just saying things because they think this is another piece of paper to get out of the way.

The teacher also described the importance of meeting/liaising with parents and explained her difficulty here:

M: Ideally I think I'd like the parents to know what we are teaching in school; generally an idea, an awareness of the school day and the school routine. I don't think most parents know neither are they interested. We send a lot of letters home on a termly basis. They don't get home because the children don't think their parents will read it, or it's not important enough. When they get home I don't know if they are read...On parents' evening they're (the children) are the ones that are translators. Because I speak Hindi it's not such a problem, but I know that with other teachers it's a problem. You just have the child there doing the interpreting and you don't know what they're saying (*laughs*)...Actually at this parents' evening I said to the children tell your parents that even if they can't come, to bring back a letter and say why they can't come or an acknowledgement that this letter has actually reached home...I can't always explain to the parents what level three or four I would want the child to reach. I can't open the National Curriculum document and say – level three means being able to ...plus it's meaningless.

This teacher was concerned about the lack of training for staff for cultural issues and conflicts that could arise and the way other issues were considered more important:

M: I had a recent retraining on road safety and people from the road safety department came and they said that the school needs to take on the responsibility because parents weren't pulling their weight and I'm sure this applies to this area...[but]...I don't know if this is relevant but one of the Jamaican girls in my class was making fun of a child's name and she didn't realise that the child's name was also the name of the prophet. So just as you would say Nicky Picky, she was saying Abdullah Bukdulla – something like that- and she got beaten up at dinnertime by a lot of Muslim boys. And they said that she'd better prepare a grave and be prepared to get buried after school that day and she was so petrified that she stayed in class until her mother came to collect her. And then I spoke to the class and I said – she knows nothing about Muslim religion and I'm sure what she said had nothing to do with an attack on the religion. I said of course it's not right to make fun of somebody's name but have you all never called anybody a name? And they said – yeh, yeh we have. I said I'm sure it's something that can be forgiven isn't it? And she said sorry and I thought this was the end of the matter and come the next play-time she was brutally beaten up by the same group of Muslim boys again and that made me so cross because they seemed to agree with everything I said...It is such a difficult issue that as a teacher I wouldn't want to deal with it unless I had the training. I don't have the training to do it. I think I understand the conflict that goes on within them better than someone that hasn't experienced the conflict within themselves...Is it the curriculum that disallows the schools from addressing it? I don't know what it is? I think the school thinks our responsibility is mainly academic and that is all we can cope with...In [this particular

school] we spend about fifty percent of our time dealing with pastoral issues, I mean it's unending.

Like teacher M, teacher X also expressed a frustration with the South Asian parents' lack of attendance at PTA meetings and the difficulties of having to translate information through pupils (although there was translation support at the school). This teacher does demonstrate some understanding but her sympathies are coming from a school point of view rather than empathising with the communities:

X: I think it's to do with communication. You know we have one person in our school, who isn't a member of our staff, who comes from EMAG [an ethnic minority staff support advisory group] who does translation for us. One person for a school of 400 pupils which is not a good situation because parents are not going to come and sit in front of you and talk about their children because they don't have a grasp of the language. And it's not an ideal situation to have the child translate for you... You don't really want to be giving the message to an older sibling... They're [P.T.A meetings] important because they tell the parents how the children are getting on, what is to be done, what areas the children are lacking in, what areas they're doing really well in... And it's important to get their opinions about what they think is going well and what is not going well. Children go home and they talk about their education and they say things about school so it's another way of gauging how the children are getting on as well ... When we have parents' evenings the parents that are least likely to turn up are the Asian parents.

However she did feel concerned that recent funding supported interests of African Caribbean pupils to the detriment of issues that concerned South Asian pupils:

X: There doesn't seem to be any concern about putting into place any structures or systems to help children with problems that children might [have] who have ESL [English as a second language] I think this is a lot due to the fact that schools are now very, very target driven ...to get our SATS results up we target those children in years 5 and 6. But the emphasis this year seems to be on um – I quote, 'disaffected Black children.'

In general this teacher felt that equal opportunity, rather than the particular interests of specific ethnic minority groups, was the most important thing to keep in mind. This teacher also saw South Asian children in terms of a broader socio-economic problem:

X: I mean at ... we do get a lot of children who have extreme behaviour. So we tend not to do competitive things with them although they learn such a lot playing competitive games. We do sharing activities – so just to give them life skills ...I mean a lot of children who come to ... come from very difficult backgrounds. They come from single parent families; they come from families where there is not a lot of money; they come from families where for one reason or another the children are under a lot of pressure to grow up more quickly than they should do and those sorts of things relate to how children relate to each other; how they relate to adults; how they relate to work. We also have a lot of children who have been excluded from other schools...I think what happens is that Black children feel more of an alliance with White children... It's very difficult because so much time is spent on numeracy and literacy

and it doesn't focus on children with ESL. It's very difficult for those children because they get more and more panicked because as a teacher you just do not have the time [to help them].

Teacher X adds to her school-focused viewpoint by including the demands of Ofsted.

X: Ofsted have to ask questions of the parents and they have to have meetings with parents but at a school like ...where we don't have a lot of parent participation, you know they never get to know the views of the parents.

However, she also expressed an understanding of why Black parents, including South Asian parents may be prevented from getting involved with the school in any substantial way:

X: I think it's to do with the fact that schools and educational institutions are not welcoming places for people who don't feel secure about their own ability to communicate... I do feel as a school we could do a lot better to invite people on the management committee to onto the P.T.A but all of these things are run by a clique of ma be half a dozen White parents – it's very exclusive and they don't allow other people to come in.

However, this criticism of the school was somewhat contradicted by her ambivalent although understanding attitude to South Asian parents:

X: We've always got places available on our management committee...we've only had two Asian people ...But it's like anything else ...it's very, very cliquey. So you know

if you already feel threatened; you are not going to put yourself into a position where you feel even more vulnerable; where you are going to be the only voice that is saying – you don't want to put yourself in that position...I mean I think it's a really, really sad situation that we don't try more ways of encouraging Asian parents to come in and be part of the school you know. And a lot of it is down to the fact that we don't have time.

This teacher was also aware that the lack of connection with South Asian communities could be a great disadvantage at crucial times when the communities could be part of the curriculum:

X: We did a little topic about the families; we did. People were asked to come in but only certain people, and it wasn't a balance of all the religions, to tell the children about families and about religion.

S: Did you have someone from the Islamic community?

X: No we don't have any Asian parents who volunteer to do anything within the school- um. No, not really. They don't come in and offer their skills and that's not for want of being asked.

Although some South Asian parents had expressed some appreciation of her identity as an Asian member of staff she seemed unconvinced that they saw her as any more than part of the school institution:

X: Some of my parents will say that they're so pleased...that ... they do have an Asian member of staff ...it's just another Black face.... that is as far as it goes because there isn't that exchange or there isn't that communication. I think they see me as part of the establishment.

Teacher X felt inhibited by the lack of time and funding allocated to address the requirements of ESL (English as a second language). However she described ways in which EMAC (ethnic minority achievement consultants) had creatively developed positive relations between parents and schools:

X: EMAC teachers which are absolutely brilliant. But there is actually no time to get these things in. And I think that's something set up by the community and also by EMAC for parents who've got ESL but it's mainly focusing on key stage one children. What happens is that the parents come in and they make books with their children or they make games with their children. It's really to develop the parents' language which is really, really wonderful, it's really good but the school is saying that we may not have the resources to be able to offer this next year.

Therefore in relation to why the school may have a different attitude to the parents, teacher X found it difficult to respect the parents' attitudes. By contrast teacher M was more empathetic and less judgemental. Unlike teacher X, teacher M could understand why South Asian parents may behave in a different way from her or from other parents.

Furthermore, not only the teachers varied in their views of parent, the schools themselves did. The teachers were asked which of the following three options (see Nicholls, 1999) their

school encourages parents to take part. The first one is school focused; parents are involved with fund raising and governing, the second was curriculum focused; parents are expected to help with their children's homework and help in the classroom and the third was a parent-focused attitude in the school where parents are seen as important educators in their own right. In response teacher M understood her school took the third option and teacher X that her school took the second. These variations would inevitably affect the way in which the teachers communicated with their parents, which in turn developed expectations about the parents.

5.2.7. Extra information including the context of the National Curriculum and Ofsted.

Teacher M felt frustrated by the limitations of the curriculum and its particular focus on academic achievement. She felt it created problems for teachers generally and did not help to address important cross-cultural problems that have been already described above. Furthermore, she was concerned that the National Curriculum in reality left little opportunity to address issues of equal opportunity:

M: They do have tokenistic bits on ESAN or equal opps but the book is so thick that all you're interested in is on finding out what you have to teach. You're not worried about the ESAN and SEN about it.

The various problems that this teacher had already experienced with the communities was further exacerbated by her frustration with the National Curriculum. She found the tests and their preparation very demanding and undermining to her relationship with her pupils:

M: Oh, it's so ugly- I absolutely hate it. But in early January I've been to a couple of training courses where teachers from around [name of locality] come in to discuss how we can boost the children's results and so on. And the fever really begins to build up and even though you try not to get the children stressed about it; you cannot help mentioning at least twenty times a day- in the SATS you would do this: In the English SATS you would do this. I think since February we have dropped the National Curriculum and focusing only on Maths, English and Science because every school wants to achieve certain targets results-wise. And there's a big build up and the children hate it, I hate it and the parents who are aware of this come in and let me know how miserable it is making their children.

However, despite these constraints the teacher used every opportunity to include culturally relevant material for her pupils:

M: I try to adjust my ways to suit the children's needs and follow the National Curriculum at the same time. In one curriculum area like history a lot of the topics are to do with European or British history but there is probably one fifth of it that deals with histories of other cultures. And we have a choice of West African States or Indus valley and we generally take the Indus valley because so many of our children come from Pakistan and Bangladesh. So we do quite a detailed study of this in year six. So there is some scope for this in certain subject areas. Being a school where there are so many ethnic groups you cannot help bringing in some of their cultures and languages into what you do. A lot of our R.E. [religious education] celebrations, and even assemblies teachers do themselves do focus on different cultures, religions and languages.

In general Teacher M had quite an insight into the limitations of the parents, their relative ignorance of the school curriculum, focus on homework and tests. She appeared to be frustrated by both the South Asian parents and the National Curriculum requirements. Here then there was awareness of problems but without necessarily being able to resolve them.

As with teacher M Teacher X also felt under pressure from Ofsted and the National Curriculum and was critical of its lack of relevance in the pupils' lives. This again added to the problems she already faced in terms of her difficulties with the South Asian communities:

X: Our work is already created for us. It's not coming from the children...you can't always address the things that the children are having difficulty with within the strategy that the Government has developed. For you to address those needs what they say is that it's like a rolling programme so that every year or every term you come back to visit these things and there is the opportunity for you to do that. But for me as a teacher it makes more sense for me to address the issues as soon as you become aware of it...But because of the constraints of the strategies you can't... it's a national document and you as a school are lumped in with everyone else in the country to meet particular targets which have no relevance to developing children; and you know, making them aware that we live in a world that is made up of all these different cultures; and we have to respect everybody in their different ways for their different beliefs. There is no time in the curriculum... It's a very, very test-driven situation... It does affect the atmosphere because it affects how you teach, it's that you are teaching to a test. That is what you teach to because with performance-related pay and all of these things that coming in now – your salary is linked to how your

children do...Teachers are under so much pressure during that Ofsted week. You just don't have ...I mean we specifically asked for a multicultural team when we had our Ofsted and we didn't get that...there were no Black people on the team; there didn't seem to be awareness of Black issues. ...I think the thing that interests them most - Ofsted the most – is how a school is doing in its tests.

This teacher's relative lack of knowledge and experience of the communities could mean that she was unclear where to place the blame for the lack of communication between the school and community. She showed relative indifference and lack of contact for different reasons and therefore her situation remained considerably unresolved.

Teacher X, like teacher M expressed concern about the Eurocentric content of the curriculum and yet found ways to adapt it:

X: The text that they give you is already written down for you...and very few parts of the text come from other cultures. They're very, very Eurocentric, even in fact very, very British...mean I think it has huge implications for those children who are not born in this country or whose parents were not born in the country. ...primary school education in England does not help children who are not White to identify with the curriculum, like history; for instance if you take what we are supposed to do with the Victorians it has absolutely no relevance or bearing for children who are not White. It's all very White.... When I teach I always talk about colonialism and the empire and things like that. It's all about the Industrial Revolution but from a British point of view and those sorts of things, so we are not making use of the resources we have in our communities...if issues come up in the classroom...then I will deal with those; I

will make time to do that. And what suffers is my artwork...my philosophy about education and about life is not about that. It's about breaking down those barriers. It's about saying to people yeh OK; I know that you have really strong feelings about this and really strong feelings about that but you still need to move forward...[what] you do need to do is to understand that there are other views as well. And I think that's come from being born here and seeing how hard it is for Black people.

In general we can say that, Teacher (M) who had had a religious upbringing and was initially educated in India was much more aware of the issues around religion and identity, and expressed some understanding of the parents' concerns. By contrast teacher (X), had never lived on the Subcontinent or in a South Asian community and focused on general issues of equal opportunity, took a more school focused response and appeared to be less aware of the particular concerns of her South Asian participants.

Both teachers were constrained in such a way that despite their insights they were unable to resolve concerns they raised, although they did use their initiative and imagination to reach beyond the limitations of the National Curriculum dictates.

Therefore although all the participants in this study are of South Asian origin, teachers, parents and pupils, this does not necessarily give them a connection, in fact the impasse between the school and communities alienated the teachers. As school is not the only site for education for the South Asian communities and education in the Mosque provides meaning and direction in their lives, the South Asian teachers felt in conflict with these other priorities. Therefore although the two teachers being non-White and of Asian origin potentially share issues related to equal opportunity with the parents, they also expressed a sense of alienation

from the communities. The demands of these teachers' jobs and the dictates of the National Curriculum left little room for sharing any understanding with the South Asian parents in this study.

Part three: The three modes

5.3. The organisation and content of the three modes

Each mode draws upon material from interviews with and observations of the three communities and each is qualitatively different in some ways having some of its own particular set of priorities and areas of difference. These modes differentiate between degrees of involvement with UK society. The modes reflect responses to the UK society including the school and have been named to reflect their main characteristic: "reaffirming", "contradictory" and "dynamic". The data is categorised by:

- Looking at all responses from nine final interviewees and the pupils.
- Identifying three kinds of response (the three modes) across these interviewees.
- Locating particular topics, which elicited particular responses i.e. some topics (e.g. religion) elicited responses in all the three modes, other topics (e.g. family life) were not a focus in all the three modes.

In order to convey the lived experiences of participants and to avoid too many fragmented excerpts of selective quotes the analysis in this chapter includes two in-depth studies: one of a Bangladeshi family in mode one; one of a Sikh radical interviewee in the third mode.

The first mode

The reaffirming mode reflects a more traditional South Asian perspective of life. Themes emerging are: *cultural identity, family life religion and diversity.*

The reaffirming mode, concentrates on the maintenance of South Asian cultures, focusing on the community and home cultures replicating those on the Subcontinent. This mode offers an important insight into the very contrasting lifestyles that South Asian children can experience. A reaffirming mode may encourage avoiding too much contact with the wider UK culture, with people preferring to stay together in their own communities.

The second mode

The contradictory mode identifies difficulties and concerns that South Asian participants raise in relation to the wider society. Education is seen to comprise both the school and Mosque and there is an awareness of and concern with cross-cultural tensions. The themes that emerge are: *contradictory feelings and confusions, alternative priorities, religion and education, racism, and the school educational system.* This second mode focuses particularly on responses to the tensions between different educational systems and pedagogic practices e.g. between the school and Mosque and also the Subcontinent. The difference between educational systems is intensified by a difference between secular and sacred systems. This response recognises problems and difficulties that arise because of the values in the wider society and in particularly those between school and home, but without necessarily being able to resolve them.

The third mode

The dynamic mode offers an insight into the more dynamic and bicultural elements in the communities and focuses upon the participants' intellectual, religious and cultural capital in

the wider sense rather than education within the school. The themes that emerge are: *similarities with westerners, religion, education, identity, and racism, and synthesis.*

This final third mode reveals how a few but nonetheless significant members within the communities are to some degree able to transcend the difficulties that schools, communities and Mosques or/and Gurdwaras face by intellectual and imaginative endeavour. This type of identity manages to integrate western or alternative perspectives with eastern. This synthesis though cognisant of the problems faced at both an intra personal and inter-group level indicates a potential for bicultural ability that could be nourished and developed within the school context.

First mode: reaffirming responses

5.4. *"Reaffirming responses"* represent the traditional beliefs and practices, which originate on the Subcontinent, as being the most important. Responses in this mode positively aim to promote and maintain these practices and beliefs and are less interested in the contrast that exists in the wider UK society. These members of the South Asian communities within this locality in the UK showing this response often demonstrates a "real" rather than "symbolic" relationship with the Subcontinent, having lived there and having been able to make regular visits out there. There is less identification with a UK cultural identity and an acute awareness of racism in the wider society.

This mode is divided into the three central themes: *cultural identity, family life, religion and diversity*. There is also an in-depth study of a Bangladeshi family at the end of this mode.

The data combines a range of interviewees: the three Bangladeshi interviewees (B1, B2 and B3), the Sikh spokesperson (S1), Sikh member (S2) and all the Pakistani interviewees (P1, P2 and P3). Like the pupils these interviewees expressed an enthusiasm and hope to maintain their cultural beliefs and practices. The data also combines material from the preparatory group interview with the pupils as well as the group interview of the Bangladeshi pupils.

Summaries of the final interviewees are given when they first appear in the text.
More detail from individual interviews and earlier accounts for the community representatives is available in the appendices.

Participants in this mode expressed a sincere and deep attachment to their families and home on the Subcontinent. They frequently enthused about their experiences abroad though none expressed a desire to live in such challenging political and economic circumstances. They emphasised the importance both culturally and socially of these places and the need for regular visits. The experience of family belonging, warmth and generosity was what they said that they returned for. Several of these participants suggested that it was essential for the researcher to visit their country to understand the reasons for their attachment, their beliefs and practices.

Notably this mode has a predominance of Bangladeshi community interviewees and pupils in terms of the number of responses. The Bangladeshi predominance may be the result of the following factors: the Bangladeshi community has very close links to its culture and relations on the Subcontinent. Bangladeshis are the most recent of the South Asian ethnic minority immigrants to the UK and visit their relatives in Bangladesh regularly. They are also the smallest and most closely knit of the communities. These attributes mean that their Bangladeshi South Asian identity, values and beliefs are more easily maintained through their communications; they have less need to mediate with a western culture as they have a strong sense of belonging and shared resources within their own particular community. Their responses reveal some of the difference and strength of a UK based, traditionally orientated South Asian community. (The researcher also lived with families in Bangladesh and could therefore study the similarities and affinities between families living across the globe with the same original cultural beliefs and practices as recorded in the Appendix six).

In general the language barrier raised considerable problems for interviews with the Bangladeshi families because the mothers had invariably been born and brought up in

Bangladesh. This factor may be the cause or result of a self-affirming identity (or both). Other Bangladeshi women who lived outside the area were less tied to the security of living in a Bangladeshi-speaking community because they were fluent in English. Being more affluent they invariably chose to live in more prestigious areas nearby. Therefore on one level this inner city location typified expectations of pressure and poverty yet the community centres drew on a range of classes and professions and is certainly not just a working class community. There is a sense of loyalty among the Bangladeshis living in wealthier parts of the city, which means that more educated and affluent members were still very committed, loyal and responsible towards their community. They join in with communal activities and help to develop the skills and facilities for other women and to help them feel less isolated.

5.4.1. Central themes

Cultural identity

The meaning of identity is clearly maintained through religious and cultural beliefs and practices that originated abroad. At times this cultural knowledge exists in its own right; at others it is expressed as a "reaction" to western beliefs and practices. There was also a vital "interactive" dimension to the values and beliefs of the wider society and those of the communities, though in specific ways their identification was with their countries of origin.

Identity was often described as a sense of belonging to a particular cultural group and differentiation from others in the wider South Asian community. The researcher discovered that the various communities wanted to maintain specific languages and cultural beliefs and this was given as the rationale for using separate community buildings. It was clear also clear that different communities wished to maintain a different dress style; the Bangladeshis wore saris and the Pakistanis and Sikhs wore

shalwar kameez. Features that relate to identity were expressed in the interviews and also through the overt display of certain customs and dress. The display of costume in itself demanded acquiescence to certain customs and beliefs especially when it easily differentiated the South Asians generally from the wider society. This area of dress caused particular anxiety for the different generations who, to differing degrees, wished to be acceptable to a wider range of people. Mothers mentioned the tensions around how strict they could be about expressions of modesty for their daughters. Others decided to ignore restrictions for both themselves and their daughters and a female pupil C10 (S) felt constrained by expectations in her extended family that she should wear Shalwar Kameez. However, even for those who did not want to overtly affiliate with South Asian beliefs and practices there was a verbal commitment to the importance of their religious and cultural identity. These forms of identity corresponded to the codes of conduct and appearance on the Subcontinent. Fear of the ways of the West was at times justified and exemplified in the perceived provocative and undignified way in which western women can dress. In fact cultural identity was often a complex mixture of rejection of the West and respect for their own codes of dressing. Skin colour also made the decision to dress differently from the wider society easier. Those who had experienced racism felt that they were going to be excluded or discriminated against anyway, so they might as well wear traditional clothes and conspicuously affiliate with their own kind.

All the communities wished to preserve their own languages, Bangla, Sylheti and/or Bengali for the Bangladeshis and Punjabi for the Sikhs and Urdu and Punjabi for the Pakistanis and some Arabic for the Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims. It would seem that the cultural identity of being Bangladeshi, Sikh or Pakistani was a clearer more self affirming identity than that attached to being a UK citizen.

The focus on maintaining a specific cultural identity suggested that for this mode identity dominated concerns in South Asian participants' lives. Parents frequently expressed the need for their children to have a strong sense of cultural identity to combat the levels of racism and rejection that the wider society could inflict. They felt that they should educate their children about their cultural beliefs and practices so that they knew how to be accepted within their country of origin or the South Asian community in general. Mixed marriages are still seen as a threat to the maintenance of these beliefs and practices. The parents stressed the importance of developing the children's sense of pride in who they are and where they come from. These issues clearly relate to the issues that these children could face at school where their cultures were in general ignored, or misunderstood or not known about.

The extracts below register particular identification with South Asian identity that certain participants emphasised.

5.4.1.1.Interviewees

For this theme all the Bangladeshi interviewees are quoted. Summaries of their general outlook and history are offered below

B1.

This spokesperson came to live in the UK when she was four years old. She had an arranged marriage but asserted her rights about exactly who she was prepared to marry. She also has a high regard for her parents who she meets up with daily. Now married, and mother of one child, she has adopted the traditional clothes (Shalwar Kameez). She believes in her

Bangladeshi culture and religion and is a confident clear-headed person who enjoys the responsibility of running one of the centres.

B2.

This member was born in the UK and had a fairly disruptive childhood attending several different schools. At fifteen her father insisted that she should learn Arabic and Bangla. She had an arranged marriage and three children. She is very aware of the tensions that exist across cultures and deeply loyal to her community and Bangladeshi identity. She is a very reflective and independently minded person, although she is very close to her father and generally defers to her husband's and father's judgements.

B3.

This radical lived in Bangladesh until the age of ten and her English is stilted. She is a mother of two and divorced from her husband who was violent. Her experience of being a divorcee made her separate from the Bangladeshi community in the area, she expresses an ambivalent attitude towards Bangladeshi culture and she states that she is "Asian" avoiding committing herself to her Bangladeshi origins but rather emphasising the importance of Islam and also education. She is an adventurous, independently minded person.

All three Bangladeshi interviewee expressed pride in their Bangladeshi identity.
B1 emphasises the importance of her Bangladeshi identity whatever it is like living in the UK.

B1: As for being Bangladeshi I love it.

Even B3 who had felt excluded from the general Bangladeshi community in the UK locality felt loyal:

B3: I like being a Bangladeshi, I'm proud of it...I can't just ignore my Bangladeshi people.

B2, was enthusiastic about Bangladeshi cultural activities, in this case those that were still maintained in the UK.

S: And you have that lovely poetry session as well.

B2: Yes every first and third of the month...And everybody likes to sing as well...Did you hear Bengalis singing as well?

To maintain an appreciation and knowledge of Bangladesh and Bangladeshi Lifestyles, the interviewees felt it was essential for their children to visit Bangladesh. B2 also emphasised the importance of visits to Bangladesh to refresh cultural knowledge and identity. Others also suggested that to reaffirm the meaning and historical roots to their identity Bangladeshi parents emphasised the importance of these visits.

B2: And if you think about holidays, people only go to Bangladesh – that's their holiday...

S: What do you think are going to be things that are going to sustain the culture?

B2: Going back to Bangladesh is I think the main thing because otherwise you can't sort of refresh yourself and the kids; their language just becomes stilted in this country. If they go to Bangladesh it'll just revive everything and freshen them up.

B2 expanded upon the cultural features of Bangladesh. She drew attention to the sense of intimacy that people in Bangladesh can enjoy through their social behaviour. She described the way in which people often gather to chatter about almost anything.

B2: Oh they (the Bangladeshis) like talking about anything and everything; they love "addar" it's called. Bangladeshis are famous for ...

S: What's it called?

B2: "Udda"...that's what Bangladeshis are famous for.

S: Is that chatting?

B2: It's just chatting – you have meetings with people and you're just chatting the hours away. ..We did that yesterday; we just popped into somebody's without announcing. Nobody ever – although things are changing as well because people's lives are so busy. People just drop in and say 'hello'....That's trying to keep all the Bengali traditions – making slapsa or what we call snacks. Always wanting people to be here or inviting people over.

S1, the Sikh spokesperson and P3, the Pakistani radical also voiced a deep attachment to their cultural identity and connection with lands of origin despite the fact that P3 had never been there. These two interviewees are introduced below.

S1.

This spokesperson was born in the UK but her family are very close to their extended family in the Punjab and she usually returns there with her parents, her husband and her two children annually. She is deeply religious, yet her vocation as a nurse has made her realise connections with other Asians and non-religious English families. She feels passionately about education and guidance for the younger generation so that they do not lose their connection with Sikhism and yet learn to use the opportunities available to them in the UK. She is a very assertive, outspoken and thoughtful person.

P3.

This radical was born in the UK, is the eldest daughter of a family of four and lives with her parents whom she has a high respect for. She has opted to translate both the conventions of Islam and Pakistani culture in her own terms and is very critical of some of the small-mindedness of her community. She has a degree and understands that her education has helped her to become increasingly independent and yet she is very loyal to her Pakistani identity and although she does sometimes dress in European clothes for work and college, she is clear about her different values and beliefs. During the research period for this thesis she has had a happy, arranged marriage. She is a quiet, imaginative and forceful person.

S1 expressed a profound sense of belonging:

S1: It's just the fact that you immediately belong there.

This sense that the wider society cannot identify nor accept their different values and beliefs intensifies the feeling of acceptance with their land of origin. P3 for example feels that only in Pakistan will the meaning of her life be properly respected and will she feel happy to ultimately rest:

P3: If I was going to die I'd rather get buried over there than over here...I would hate ...to be buried here and no one goes to your grave...out there you are with your own kind.

In particular this mode which focuses upon reaffirmation was also a means of not confronting the wider UK society or engaging with it.

B1: Because [it's] your culture and you can get away with [things] and you can explain to other people and when you do they respect that.

This avoidance brought with it a belief that because things were different in the wider culture, people out there would just accept your difference if you explained it.

5.4.1.2. Pupils

All the pupils expressed a pride in their knowledge of their own cultural language

e.g. Bengali and also of Arabic. It was noticeable though that the Sikh pupils strongly identified with being Sikh but were concerned about their lack of knowledge of Punjabi and Sikhism. However there may be clashes in kinds of thinking with those they encounter at school. All the Bangladeshi pupils stated clearly that unless they were born in Bangladesh, they saw themselves a British-Bangladeshi. However, this appeared to be more of a technical than an emotional affiliation. Similarly if they were Pakistani they saw their identity as predominately Muslim and Pakistani.

C6 (P): All of us three we spend most of our life in England but we're Muslims really...

C7 (P): We've got Pakistani families and Pakistani ancestors...My name is [name of child]. I am a Muslim and I'm born in [the locality in this study] and I am proud to be a Muslim and I see myself as a British citizen but I'd put Pakistani first.

Participants were eager to expand upon their experiences and family connections in Bangladesh in "their" country. It was noticeable that their home of origin and its features were expressed in terms of the first person possessive. For instance one pupil stated:

C2(B): I like going there because I can visit all my relatives and ...[it's] my own country.

One child who had never visited expressed great excitement about the possibility.

C3(B): I want to go to Bangladesh because everyone says that it's really fun; all my relatives and cousins have been there but I haven't.

The material below reflects the pupils' enthusiasm for their cultural heritage and land of origin.

One participant said that it was exciting because you meet more people and can speak another language. Yet others enthused about the food, games and general experience: C4(B): "And you can walk around with your bare feet and play cricket and football and eat good food and hot spices. Another added C2(B): "Especially like the restaurant food that's nice". All those who had been to Bangladesh expressed excitement about certain cultural festivities they had experienced there. The conversation below registers the way in which family, cultural traditions and religion are enmeshed.

C1(B): Miss did you see the people dancing in Bangladesh? ....

C2(B): Yes ...they [musicians] come to your house and they start playing music.

S: For a religious reason or just?

C2(B): No just singing.

S: It's a Bangladeshi tradition?

C1(B): But they are Muslims.

C1(B): Yeh all my family...my grandma and grandpa were dancing!

C4(B): And one time when you have to stay in the Mosque all night it happens – like two times a year.

C1(B): We're just lucky.

C4(B): We're just lucky cos I went in the wintertime and it happens in the winter so I went there.

Even the pupil who had never been to Bangladesh had learnt, from helping a visiting uncle about the differences between Bangladesh and the UK.

C3(B): And we, I have, how do you say sasa in um? ...an uncle coming from Bangladesh to here but he didn't know really anything about this place and I had to explain to him.

S: What sort of things did you explain?

C3(B): I said you have to learn how to cross the road because in Bangladesh there ain't roads...And in Bangladesh there are film posters of actresses and actors and I had to explain to him that there ain't any here.

Enthusiasm about the positive contrast that Pakistan offered by comparison to the UK

was also indicated by C6 (P) and C9 (P)'s comments:

C6(P): You can walk anywhere you like...just go wherever you like.

And in another interview:

C9(P): It's cos it's a free country.

These comments can be also understood in the light of P1's explanation (given later), that parents understand that the people around them in Pakistan have the same values and understanding. Therefore parents can feel relaxed about letting their children wander around.

These pupils clearly felt emotionally and personally proud to have knowledge of Bangladesh and also to be linked to their relatives there. It was also clear with particular reference to the pupils' interviews that when faced with the history of the partition there was an association and affiliation with being South Asian and not British. Thus, the identification with a group and community expressed as an identity conveyed not just a way to live life but also something substantial, fairly easily defined and also positively affirming.

The extended family in Bangladesh was a great resource in terms of "stories". These stories also embodied a mixture of myth and fantasy. However, most importantly they were entwined with the meanings that old cultures maintain through stories in the same way that fairy stories that originate in the mountainous forests of Germany, such as " Hansel and Gretel" act as a kind of warning to ward children away from venturing into the forest. So in

this sense the Bangladeshi myths originating in a country that suffers from tidal waves and flooding were around the dangers of water and the sea. In the following interview between pupils and the researcher a sense of mystery and imagination was captured. It was clear that community and home life circulated beliefs originating in Subcontinent. This could create quite a different set meanings for these particular families which also allowed them to maintain their "difference" from others as well as a sense of pride in their identities and identification based upon these shared stories and mysteries.

C1(B): Miss do you know there's mermaids in Bangladesh?

C2 (B): Yeh bad mermaids.

S: Bad mermaids – what do the bad mermaids do?

C2 (B): They pull you under water then they...

C1(B): No when you're swimming like they pull your legs half way and you're going to start drowning and then you've got to kick them off; you've got to kick them hard.

C2(B): There's a kind of monster at the corner of the swimming pool.

C1(B): And he just grabs you and pulls you underwater.

S: Do you believe that?

C1(B): I don't know.

C4(B): You never know it might be true!

C1(B): My grandfather he died, miss he died in the swimming pool.

C2(B): I do believe in ghosts.

These stories obviously captured the children's imagination and they expressed a sense of awe and mystery they wished to preserve. Possibly too, their sense of "belief" gathered through the religious element in their lives made these stories or myths more believable. There was clearly a link between the myths around Bangladesh and the stories that the Imams in the Mosque told.

C4(B): At the end [of a session in the Mosque] sometimes they [the imams] tell you stories...

S: What sort of stories do they tell you?

C4(B): About the prophets.

C2(B): And about the ghosts.

These interesting responses revealed that the pupils' own cultural and religious

knowledge created a profound sense of identity, meaning and reaffirmation. It also seemed to offer them a sense of pride and ownership.

In conclusion the pupils expressed a strong affiliation, sense of ownership and cultural knowledge of their South Asian identity. Although they realised that life in these South Asian countries could be harsh and that they would not want to live there, they did identify with that part of their nationality. They were eager to inform the interviewer about "their" country and had digested considerable knowledge about it. However, it was also clear that they feared a lack of respect and understanding about this identity. There were various problems around living in the UK and being South Asian that they wanted to explore and express in a reassuring setting. The predominance of pupil comments on identity may be the result of their life in the mixed community of school. Adults have more choice in terms of their social groups and could therefore choose self-affirming groups where their cultural identity was not challenged.

5.4.2. Family life

A key priority, that was not religious, identified in this mode related to the extended family. Although the logistical and practical arrangements of the extended family are in themselves interesting phenomena, and create powerful reasons for the links between families across the globe, this research is concerned with the emotional, social and conceptual ramifications that affect our self-perception, identity and association with others. Thus in the context of the family it is interested in the way in which a sense of "self" is related to expectations of belonging or autonomy was considered, for instance the South Asian communities in general voiced the importance of responsibility to Elders and family members. This in turn conferred

a sense of belonging and commitment to more than individual needs and space. It could be anticipated that parents would therefore expect their children to respect their responsibilities to both home and school. They may also be concerned that their children's behaviour at school and in the wider society reinforced a respectable and positive image of their community and family and not just their individual needs and impulses.

There were differences between gender experiences and expectations within the community and concern with inequality for women. However, the data also revealed that times were changing and that the concept of arranged marriage could not be construed through a western lens, rather that it was embedded in a complex system resulting in some disadvantages, but with advantages in relation to particular family qualities. Furthermore, expectations of personal space and hierarchical arrangements were clearly different from those in a western cultural setting. Issues of autonomy and interdependency also relate to the expectations of personal space and respect for hierarchical arrangements, as noted above. These differences may well create tensions for children who are encouraged to pursue self-development and a sense of autonomy and independence at school as part of the socialization processes for life in the wider UK society.

5.4.2.1. Interviewees

As was seen with families on the Subcontinent there was an acceptance of certain codes of behaviour and certain distinctively non-western features of family life. The interviewees B1, the Bangladeshi spokesperson, provided some useful data here.

B1: Respect everyone really, respect the Elders, especially the Elders because like I said Bengali culture is different [from UK culture]

B1 later gave an example of how an Elder would construe a situation. This example illustrates the authority that an Elder would assume as well as the clear set of customs and beliefs that order and justify certain behaviours:

> And my mum [B1's mother would be considered to be an Elder by virtue of her age] came out of the car and she says I've never seen a girl like that in my entire life, just as well we didn't like her; even if we did I'd have said no [to a marriage with her son] - who wants a girl like that; she showed no respect...My mum was saying that she [the girl's mother] should have told her daughter how to behave...we'd seen her [the daughter] and then she should have stayed away from the limelight.

B1 like the pupils emphasised the importance of the extended family in maintaining family history and the stories that capture cultural knowledge:

B1 I sat next to my gran and ...my gran said I was about the age of your sister when I got married into this family and I was like wow gran you about five when you got married and she was like yeh I was about five when I got married... granddad ...he must have been that age as well...I was like what did you do all day? And she was like I used to play with my dollies (*laughs*). And that's amazing because that's a story for me to remember all my life and when my child grows up I'll tell him that story you know how my grandma was about five and how she used to play with her dollies. You know if I didn't go to Bangladesh – my gran's dead now – she's been dead for the past five years – I wouldn't have heard these stories.

However unlike the pupils this participant was aware of differences in the perception of families from her experience with her sister in Bangladesh. B1 recounts her younger sister's confusion when her teachers in Bangladesh asked her who her family was.

B1 She said [the teacher in Bangladesh], 'what's the family?' And she [her sister] said my mum, my dad and she says my older sister and my older brother and my younger brother because that's us – just us. And the teacher kept saying yeh who else. ...And they [the teachers] were like laughing because they knew she was from this country ... And they said what about your grandma? And she's saying oh no, no it's only my brothers and sisters not my grandma. What about your granddad they said, and she said oh he's dead.' And your aunties and uncles?', [and she said] oh no they've got their own houses and she wasn't thinking of the family in Bangladesh.

Here, although it was understood that children born in the UK would have a different expectation of what constituted a family, this difference was seen with a sense of amusement rather than any threat to expectations of the family.

The Bangladeshi member B2 explained that respect towards Elders entails responsibility: "You should always respect her [your mother]. Take care of her..." There was also an expectation that family and community shared decisions together, people did not just go off and make decisions on their own. B2 articulated this aspect clearly:

B2: So there is always someone to support you, because that's how we do things you know. If we decide we are going to do something – get a job ...we ask advice from everybody.

For B3, the Bangladeshi radical, having faced a sense of isolation from her community because she had suffered from a violent arranged marriage and after many years managed to get a divorce, it was clear that the family, by contrast to the community in her view provided the greatest security for community members:

S: And where do you think the children's greatest confidence lies – do you think it's with the community or their families?

B3: Their family.

When asked where she had found her independence she included the family as a vital part in that independence.

S: Where have you got your independence from to deal with that – I mean it's quite a difficult situation for you on your own?

B3: I was on my own but there was also my family.

S2, the Sikh member and P1, the Pakistani spokesperson also contributed to an understanding of South Asian expectations of the family, they are introduced below:

S2.

This member was born in the UK. She is a devote Sikh with two children and very good relations with her in-laws whom she hopes will be able to pass on Sikh values and beliefs to her children. She prefers to live in this area because here there is a Sikh community compared to another area she inhabited. However, she is unhappy about the locality because of its low socio-economic conditions and finds elements of the community very limited and constraining. She prefers to think and act independently of the community centres. She believes that education is vital for her children and supports the local school but she is concerned about the lack of knowledge of Sikhism within the school. She is a very reflective and dignified person.

P1.

This spokesperson came to England from Pakistan at the age of five, she is close to her extended family in Pakistan. She has a high respect for her parents who were able to adapt some of the more stringent aspects of Pakistani culture: she feels she was given a certain amount of freedom. She has three children and is happily married through an arranged marriage. She is deeply committed to working for the Pakistani communities in the area, has acquired a degree as a mature student and is a very reflective person with excellent social skills. Her emphasis is on maintaining Pakistani cultures and Islam but also adapting to the UK context.

Also S2 in particular was very clear about the different expectation of space that exists in South Asian families by contrast to expectation of family life in the West or

wider UK culture. In the South Asian family there was an expectation that people would share space more and join in with activities and it would be rude to leave family members alone if they were visiting. By contrast she understood that English people would worry about imposing or being imposed upon.

In general the whole sense of collective decision-making and sharing resources and concerns was clearly very important within family expectations. This in turn led to expectations of belonging to communities as well. The closeness within communities was also related to being in an alien or less sympathetic wider UK culture. P1 in particular noted the expectation that people around you in Pakistan on the other hand would be thinking in a similar way, which was more reassuring than here in the UK.

P1: Out there everybody out there is the same and people are thinking in the same way as you, whereas here in our community I may be thinking totally differently from the way the rest of the community is thinking.

Importantly, all three interviewees felt that the community itself had adapted and changed. A greater affirmation and display of their cultural values as well as numbers of Bangladeshis living in the area had created this difference. Furthermore, it was the community that also sustained Bangladeshi culture. The three Bangladeshi interviewees all reinforced a sense that they would want their children to be aware of the importance of their cultural heritage and family ties. They therefore expect their children to consider these elements as important in their lives as school's contrasting beliefs and values.

B1 noted the positive way that things had changed for the community and young Bangladeshis living in the UK.

B1: It is easier now, much easier. I mean my mum used to go there in her sari, you know her bright sari and used to see her a mile off...It used to be embarrassing...I'll let her[her daughter] wear long skirts, I'll let her wear shirts with long sleeves, I'll let her wear trousers – I won't nag at her...things are changing.

The greatest hopes of change were expressed by B3 who had felt under pressure to remarry. B3:"They [people in the community] even say get married don't waste your life." Her position as a divorcee had made her happier socialising in other South Asian groups, such as the Pakistani and Sikh community gatherings. Over the two years that the fieldwork covered she gradually expressed a sense that the community was changing. In her initial interview right at the beginning of the fieldwork, where she is identified as RB3, (see appendix) she emphasised the difficulties of being accepted by the Bangladeshi community because of her circumstances. Her independence and difference placed her as a radical. However, at the end of the two-year fieldwork she talked of change.

B3: [The community] is changing in that it's not just like the background – like the way things were before – like mostly arranged marriages were done but now like so many people think about love marriage or to see the person they are going to marry and – I feel like less force.

Nonetheless B3 recognised that community pressure that could ostracise young people and influence them to leave it.

S: I just wonder how much they [young people] do cope sometimes? You've had all those things to deal with. Can you understand why young people might break away from the community?

B3: Because people in the community don't respect you.

On another occasion B3 described how her own experience of being ostracised by the community led her to understand the way some young people could feel.

5.4.2.2. Pupils

The following range of comments from various pupils reflected the dominance of family ties in the Subcontinent: C2(B) mentioned how much he enjoyed: "Seeing all the relatives I've seen before. Plus when I went to Bangladesh I saw my mum's uncle's wife who died after we came back...You know Sabia – you know after I came back, after one month my granddad died. And when I went this year it was my auntie's wedding..." However, it was not only just knowing the family but knowing about the stories that elderly relatives could pass on. C1(B) noted: "I was lucky to see my great grandmother...my grand mum always use to sleep in ... and when I ran past she always used to call to me and she used to talk to me." To which C4(B) added: " and tell you stories" so that C1(B)continued: " They tell you all sorts about what happened to your mum and that and what she was like when she was little."

Furthermore, C8 (P) emphasises how his grandfather is his role model:

C8 (P): I just like following my religion, following my grandfather because I'm following what my grandfather does.

B2 endorses this sense that grandparents are crucial guides and owners of the past and of practices and beliefs: B2: "My dad...read stories of the prophets and what they did and that gives a background and meaning to your life."

The ties and involvement with families also meant that the children felt a deep concern for the issues that arose in these countries. P1 was aware that her community would identify and connect with events in Kashmir. Pakistanis in this urban area have a deep connection with Pakistan and related political issues e.g. Kashmir. She realised that the community was still deeply affected by what goes on in Pakistan because they are still so connected to their relatives out there and yet they could not face living there anymore because of the stressful political, economic and social conditions. Thus to reaffirm their identity they could, on occasion, relate more closely to the political and social issues that arose in these countries than those that occurred in the UK. For example C9(P) and C5(B) expressed this concern in their group interviews: C9(P): "Miss, India and Pakistan are fighting about Kashmir "[sounding earnest and worried] and C5(B) joined in with: "Why are they fighting over Kashmir?" Ultimately their lands of origin were closely tied to a deep sense of security.

5.4.3. Religion

Religion was also very much part of the South Asian communities' significant identities. It was also the aspect of their identity that could prevent more engagement

with the wider society such as school. This Muslim identity plays an implicit and explicit part of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani participants' cultural identities; it is their most affirming and clearly meaningful part of their lives. At times participants had problems articulating the difference between their religious and cultural identities. Urdu and Arabic, the languages of the Koran were formally taught in Mosques as well as at home. These Islamic languages were considered essential and are discussed in more detail in the second mode.

Religion was consistently of interest to the participants Within the Muslim homes the Azan [call to prayer] was observed as often as possible. At least one member, invariably an Elder would be respected for observing the Azan regularly even if the family as a whole did not have time. Pakistani participants were glad to be prompted to observe the Azan when they watched Pakistani television. In all the houses religious symbols were often on display. The Sikh women expressed their sense of calm and peace when they listened to their Gurbani tapes. They stated that the purpose of their life was to be discovered through their religious beliefs and described how it ordered and inspired their lives; how there was always their God to turn to. For all participants their dress codes were ordered with respect to religious propriety. On a deeper level the fundamental meaning of their life seemed embedded in their beliefs. In fact religious life was so pertinent that they did not always suggest it was there until asked whether it was important. For instance when asked about what mattered to them they might mention the importance of the family and then when asked about their religion they would say that it was so implicit in their lives that they had forgotten to mention it. Furthermore, there was an expectation that "others" in the wider society would be Christian and it appeared easier to consider people in terms of faith rather than lack of it.

5.4.3.1. Interviewees

The interviewees registered the importance of their religious texts in terms of the meaning for their lives.

B2: They [children] need to read Arabic so that they can read the Koran because once you can read the Koran you'll be able to learn the verses that you need to know for namas [prayers]. And then there's the sort of background about how we do certain customs. So that's how my dad sort of did it with me. He did read stories of the prophets and what they did and that gives a background and meaning to your life.

S: So what do you think are most important in a child's education?

B3: I think they should know about Islam.

S: That's the most important?

B3: That's the most important thing for Muslim people– like my children go to school, but every evening I take them to the Mosque. Every Monday, Tuesday and Friday.

Furthermore it was clearly the most powerful and reaffirming element to the identity of this group and united them with other Muslims both in the local communities and the world.

S: What's it like to be a Muslim?

B3 I also feel good to be a Muslim and proud to be a Muslim.

S: Do you think that's quite different from being Bangladeshi?

B3: Yeh Bangladeshi – it's just a country – like Pakistani it's just the name – like this is England, ...– just name – name of the country. Muslim - we all are like Pakistani people; there are so many people are Muslim – they have to pray all the time five times a day; you're born to be Muslim.

S: Do you think that's the most important thing?

B3: Remember God. And if you don't remember God there are things you have to do...I have to follow Islam.

It is also essential to mention the emphasis on religion and an inner-life that the Sikh participants mentioned especially as their identity seems to be predominately related to their religion rather than their cultural origins in the Punjab.

S2 emphasised the importance of a spiritual existence and space in life:

S2: I keep the tape on – I listen to the Gurbani [Sikh hymns and prayers] tape every morning and that kind of gives you a sense of peace within and in your household...my mother- in- law has a little room in which she keeps the Guru Granthsab which is a place of worship and like she'll try and teach our kids that as

soon as they come in they must go and bow to that. So they know it's in the house and acknowledge that space.

When the researcher asked this respondent: "What makes them Sikh do you think?" She replied, "What's within ..."

In this way the sacred space for contemplation was highly respected. The in-depth study of the Bangladeshi family at the end of the mode also includes reference to this.

5.4.3.2. Pupils

The pupils emphasised the certainty, order and meaning that Islam contributed to their lives and reinforced the interviewees' views.

C4(B): If you're a Muslim then you have to do some special things and if you're just like a normal person then you just do what you want.

This was also contrasted to the lack of apparent lack of meaning or clarity associated with being a non-believer that the pupils did not relish.

C1(B): If you are a believer you go to the Mosque or Church – we read the Koran because when we die Allah's going to ask us questions and some of the questions like the answers will be in the Koran.

C2(B): If you're a good Muslim then Allah's going to like make you speak.

C1(B): Some people are non-believers.

C2(B): Don't believe in anything.

S: What do you think about non-believers?

C2(B): They can do anything they want...

C1(B): But we don't want to believe in anything; we want to believe in Allah.

These beliefs were closely aligned to a way of life and meaning for the family.

C2(B): Cos like if you're like a Muslim, Allah gives you clues to life. It says in the Koran yeh – always listen to your mum. It's like for example if like you say can you go to football practice to your mum and your mum goes 'no' – like this happened last time. I said can I go to the park and play... cricket. And my mum said 'no' and I crept there anyway and there was another cricket team there already and the day after a cricket match my mum said "yeh I told you always listen to your mum or what you want won't come true."

Thus religion served here to reinforce a respect for the rules and order in the family as well. It was considered foolish to ignore them.

C1(B): You listen to your parents – you get lost yeh and you get kidnapped and your parents won't even know.

In general the children were eager to describe their lives in terms of their particular customs, beliefs and practices. They accepted the strictness of the Mosque because it was tied into the "meaningfulness" of their lives. This sense of meaningfulness was related to the belief in an afterlife: the belief in heaven, which was mentioned on several occasions by various pupils:

C5 (B): When you die you get to go to heaven.

C7(P): If you learn the Koran it really does depend upon whether you can go to heaven.

The respect and importance of religions was also expressed by C4(B): " If you're a Muslim that you have to do some special things."

Getting to heaven was more crucial to the meaning of life than anything else as B2 has already noted when she mentions the knowledge of the Koran that her father gave her. Thus it can be assumed that involvement with the Mosque was clear and provided a sense of communal belonging despite its austerity. However, as this area overlaps with the education in the Mosque certain aspects of knowledge about Islam are accounted for in the second mode of response where relations to education are explored in greater depth. This mode one deals obliquely with the relationship with school i.e. it deals with contextual factors that affect this relationship whereas mode two deals directly with the relationship.

Although the communities had different cultural values they shared a common priority of focus on religious beliefs and identity. The meaning of life in terms of the South Asian

communities' identity seemed to be most definitely construed through the beliefs and values of the Koran or Guru Gransab. This powerful element of identity can create a sense of deep belonging. The existence of the Azan [call to prayer] in Muslim countries was understood to make a Muslim way of life easier. One Sikh participant emphasised how she would want her children to return to the Punjab so that they could understand the roots of their identity better and hear the hymns reverberate through the day and night. Even the most radical of the Sikhs enjoyed the many shrines that are scattered around India.

It seemed difficult for most of the participants to understand the meaning to people's lives if they did not follow a faith. One pupil interviewed described the link between school and the Mosque to be that they prayed to be good in both places. However religion and a conspicuous sense of order and respect for holy places is not a feature of school life.

5.4.4. Recognising Diversity

However it is important to recognise that despite the order and routines suggested in this self-affirming mode, there was also some recognition of diversity of perception and beliefs. This could be cultural diversity between the cultural group and its country of origin or diversity from the cultural group of the wider society. Respondents in this group voiced different ideas of the cohesiveness of their own cultural groups. Responses in this section are only given from the nine adult interviewees as none were identified as appropriate from the pupil interviews. In this section of mode one, the Pakistani member, P2, clarifies what he feels may be the different response to media images between Hindus and Muslims. He is introduced below.

P2.

This Pakistani member is the only male interviewee among the nine final interviewees. He is a father, born in the UK, living together with his wife, (who lived in Pakistan until she has an arranged marriage with him) and also his mother and three children. As a child he had a lot of freedom compared to his sisters and feels that Pakistani women still need to be more emancipated. He expressed a complex range of feelings towards some of his community's members, some of its cultural values and the wider UK culture as he has experienced racism. He feels strongly about the importance of education and the limitations of the local Muslims and yet he is a dedicated member of his Pakistani community. He is a very thoughtful, independently minded and amicable person.

In this section interviewees recognise diversity in relation to different issues.

S1 noted generational differences, in her comment that: " Mothers do come but it's actually grandparents who actually force their children to come [to the Gurdwara]." P2 was also aware that Muslims could be more defensive than Hindus with reference to the comedy "Goodness Gracious Me." He recognised that there would be uproar if the Sadhu was represented as a Mullah. P1 described the differences between South Asian populations that lived in different parts of the city that relate to the different cultures and groups within Pakistan itself: "Some families are from Mirpur, you know from the rural villages...I mean their mentality is still very villagey." B3 mentioned differences and problems between the community and individual families and how from her own experience she'd felt ostracised but had ultimately found some acceptance more recently.

However, it would be inaccurate to argue that the communities were that tolerant of differences. Because of strict codes, discussion and questioning could also create serious problems for South Asian parents as they tried to explain the difference between order, respect and ritual to their children whose experience of the UK society encouraged them to focus on an independence of mind. It led them to question rituals or deference to Elders. Given a choice it was clear that the more liberal-minded parents sought out the most creative elements of their South Asian cultural heritage, such as "uddar" and poetry to reaffirm their identity rather than to adopt western liberalism.

There was an awareness of some problem even within this self-affirming group amongst the spokespeople for example. B2 explained the diversity and potential controversy within the community between liberal and conservative Muslims.

B2: Some people who are very strict would say that singing is against religion, but I don't take that on board. I feel that's our leisure time and it enhances us. We wouldn't be able to do poems if people were like that but.... I think it's the fanatics and the Mullahs who try to control people and who are not very educated themselves; they believe those things. They use it as a way of controlling people.

The more liberal aspects of western secular society and education were also recognised to have positive elements for more liberal minded Muslims. B2 acknowledged the positive aspect of discussion that took place more in the UK than in Bangladesh.

B2: I think children who are brought up in this country will accept it [changes in customs] more...because people talk about it more in this country whereas people wouldn't talk about it in Bangladesh.

P1: Their counterparts there are allowed a lot more freedom [there are more relatives to visit] they think it's unfair we're living here and we can't do this and we can't do that...

She articulated the pressure for parents who are "always being judged by the community....you almost feel as if you are working against the community ..."

She imagined that this was quite different from the experience of parents in Pakistan and she also noted the more progressive views of women that are given on Pakistani television. However, she also understood that there was a stronger need to identify with the community rules and regulations because of living in an alien culture. This also meant that the community acted as a security in a way that the family could not over here: "I mean community in Pakistan is more like a community living in England then everybody is White whereas if I was in Pakistan then everybody is Pakistani...maybe I would look at the family more than the community.

The participants were happier to be influenced by changes in their lands of origin even if it was a form of westernisation than by the challenges that the different values the UK presented for them.

There is also a perception of the West as less ordered and "loose" in its conduct that was suggested by B1: " I mean when my son grows up I won't ask...I want him to have a bit of all that [reference to a certain leniency compared to her parents] but there is a limit on the freedom he will have. I wouldn't let him totally out of my hands like an English mother does when they're sixteen and they are welcome to do whatever they like - no I will have a set of rules for him as well." This control was seen as essential because: B1: "I have seen a few Bengali families who you know let their children do what they want and then they can't control these children [and then the children] try to do too much in too short time."

B1 also mentioned her perception of difference between an English mother and a Bangladeshi mother:

B1: And a Bengali mother would never say that- oh I have to have a couple of hours off to myself or I have to have a couple of hours away from my baby. A Bengali mother would never say that. I mean there is not a single parent that would say that. They're there for the child, they'll always be and they'll never say that.

This illustrates how appearance, rules, rituals and expectations of belonging can create cross-cultural conflict. From this Bangladeshi perspective it could be anticipated that parents would feel anxious about letting their children socialise too freely with other children outside the school environment and concerned that their children would pick up unacceptable cultural habits from other children in the school.

5.4.5. Data from an extended study of a Bangladesh family

A particular extended family (in fact a combination of members from two related families, FB1+2) in the Bangladeshi community was chosen because all the members were closely linked as the fathers in the families were brothers and the sons C2 (B) and C4 (B) from both the families were in the same class that was studied. Therefore all the members of the families often moved between houses for various family occasions and also constantly referred to each other. This extended family set-up was in many ways typical of the family focus that existed in the Subcontinent.

The researcher was also given the opportunity to visit and interview several of the members of the extended family. The father, his children and a cousin all spoke English well and all seemed eager to share their knowledge with the researcher. Though their lives may not be representative of the more strictly, religious households they are related through marriage and blood to other Bangladeshi families in this particular community. Both the parents and the aunt are well known and respected in this small and close Bangladeshi community.

The researcher accessed this family both through mixing with the Bangladeshi pupils in the school she was helping in and also through the Bangladeshi centre where she had already established herself. Therefore the family had the security of knowing about her already through various channels that they trusted.

The family group was composed of two parents and four children (usually residents) plus a cousin staying in the house and the aunt who also is the father's sister-in-law. She lives nearby and has four children of her own, of which one C4 (B) was in the class that the researcher studied. The father was very relaxed and confident; he is an elected member of the

Bangladesh organisation in the area. The four children, who ranged from the ages of nine to seventeen years, said that they did not speak very good Bengali, however, they did communicate well with their mother who spoke hardly any English. The mother wore amulets and a little book of the Koran around her neck. The living room was fairly empty and there was also a front room, which is for guests and prayer. In the living room the TV was on all the time displaying Indian programmes and the family moved over to watch it intermittently inbetween participating in the interviews. As is the custom in these households whenever the researcher visited she was offered a meal and given tea and biscuits.

Connections with Bangladesh and in particular Sylhet

The family chosen comes from Sylhet; the father arrived here first twenty-five years ago. They have lots of relatives out in Sylhet and have their own house there that they are very proud of. The children had visited Bangladesh earlier in the year, for three months and loved it. One child became ill because of the heat but still loved it. They like to live here for the physical comforts but also like to return to Bangladesh for long visits as long as it does not interfere with school timetables, especially for the older children. Their photos of Sylhet displayed groups of people in saris and shalwar kamis in a sunny, tropical environment. Their cousin has lived in Bangladesh and grew up there. She loves everything about it: the seasons, village life and the fact that it is "her country"; she misses Bangladesh. The oldest daughter loved visiting Bangladesh and understands that the older generation yearns for Bangladesh but says that she is used to living here and does not miss it in the same way. The aunt enjoys having all her family around her when she has the opportunity to visit Sylhet.

Dhaka is seen as being full of new ideas and more westernised. The children in the family expressed enthusiasm for Dhaka. However, the villages are enjoyed because they have more

family and relations there even though people are much poorer in the villages. The westernised side of Dhaka is seen as good for Dhaka and Bangladesh because it makes life easier for foreigners, and for those who now live in the UK but visit Bangladesh, to find what they require in terms of western comforts. However, their aunt was aware that the political situation in Dhaka was also corrupt and that Dhaka monopolised resources so that other towns outside Dhaka are seriously disadvantaged

Their cousin suggested that although they live in this country they still want to focus on Bangladeshi culture. The eldest daughter is aware of western culture through her contact with school and says she has nothing against it. However, she finds the Bangladeshi culture more important to her because that is the way she will have to live her life and therefore, Bangladeshi culture is the one she needs to know about more. Their cousin finds it hard living in the UK because she does not understand the language as well as she would like.

Family life

The family behaved in a very friendly and relaxed manner; they shared their photographs of Bangladesh and were very happy for the researcher to drop in anytime. In fact they seemed disappointed that the researcher did not make more visits. On one visit the researcher discovered that despite their relaxed welcoming manner to visitors, family occasions and religious rituals took precedence over everything else.

On this occasion it was Eid and spirits were high after a month's observance of Ramadan. This was a hectic time to visit as the extended family was constantly popping in to share in festivities and eat food. The researcher had to move rooms twice and in the end, she ended up on the staircase with the second son and his sister for the last fifteen minute although

everyone was very friendly and relaxed. Discussing ideas seemed cumbersome at such a busy time, however, a previous occasion had already been cancelled due to Ramadan celebrations. The eldest daughter, seemed to be aware of the researcher's predicament and also able to accept that the family had other agendas to deal with. She explained that although they are Muslim they are not at all fanatical. She said that the parents' hospitality is a way of life and that they often invite people in to eat and share time. Every year they also invite non-Muslims, as this year they invited the researcher and her children to have some food during Eid. This type of hospitality was obviously more important meaningful and enjoyable to them than engaging in interview situations!

The researcher shared the contexts of the letter below with this family. When the researcher was visiting Bangladesh she had asked one young woman, who was part of the extended family she lived with in Bangladesh, as an exercise in written English, to write a page about what she understood to be the difference for women living in her country and those living in the UK. This is what she learnt. *(The grammar has been edited).*

" Dear Sophia sister...women who live in our country have a sorrowful time. In our society women don't get as much honour as men. Everyone neglects women. Besides this, when a woman gives birth to a daughter she has to turn to her family for their support and sympathy. When the girl grows up, she does not get as much food, clothes and education as a boy. After that, when the girl is sixteen, seventeen or eighteen years old (like me), her father and mother give her in marriage to a boy and the bridegroom's family lots of goods. As a result the girl's education falls into a disturbing position and she gives birth to such a number of children that this is also a burden to her. She cannot do anything about this because this is her fate as a woman. It is considered to be her fault that she is a woman. In the west women get their full

rights. They can do whatever they like, they are not a burden for their family and they are independent...."

The family's response to this letter was that this is how it is for women, and that girls are known to have to marry at fifteen. They mentioned that though things are changing there is still no real choice. They found the letter honest and truthful and understood that over here women are more independent and equal to men even if they are married. They could see similarities for Bangladeshi women in both the UK and Bangladesh. They said that you are not allowed out on your own in Bangladesh but here, in the UK, you are. The eldest daughter and her cousin said that sometimes the family can be a bit of a problem because family members do not always understand what you feel and at times friends can prove to be more understanding. For these two women, friends are as important as family. They said that the Bangladeshi mothers are seen to be more like housewives and also expected to teach their children about Islam; that women do tend to do more work, especially in the home but that in Bangladesh it is easier for them because they often have servants. However, the eldest daughter who has lived in the UK all her life felt awkward about servants when she visited Bangladesh. The children's aunt has experienced differences between being a mother in the UK and in Bangladesh. She found that more people work in the UK and that therefore there is less time and it is harder to look after children and get child-care. By contrast in Bangladesh relations always help out or servants are employed.

Although the family did not feel that western culture was a threat to their beliefs and values, the eldest daughter said it was difficult to explain this complex issue. It is possible then that those members of the family who had been or were at present attending school in the UK would feel concerned about the difference between their home practices and beliefs and those

in the school. They may also feel unable to express aspects of their home lives that they felt inclined to observe because of a sense that other children and teachers would be unable to comprehend why they adopted these very different ways of life.

This family, like all the Muslim families the researcher interviewed, love the Azan and the many shrines in Bangladesh. They said that they like the idea that "All is one" and the silence of the times of Azan; the sense of sharing this time. They like to be able to pray five times a day because: "It makes you feel good; peaceful. Not doing anything but praying to God seems a good thing to do for moments." On Fridays they like to go to the Mosque to pray but there is not always time to do this, nor to pray five times a day. Their aunt said that the Azan is a fixed time to make God happy and Bangladesh allows for this time. She said that, here you have to look at the clock all the time. She does enjoy it but living over here in the UK without proper time allocated she still has so much other work to do here, she doesn't always manage Azan. The cousin felt that there is more rushing about in the UK and the peace offered by the Azan was a good contrast. However, she also felt safer here in the UK, as she feels that everything seems more out of control in Bangladesh. The researcher became aware of this contrast when she visited Bangladesh and this understanding is also reinforced by the interview with the Bangladeshi professor (described in appendix six).

Conclusion

The material in this mode indicates that a "reaffirming" response would value traditional South Asian cultural practices and beliefs more than the more westernised ways of life in the wider UK society, because they offer a greater sense of emotional and social well being for these participants. In a sense this type of response has resolved the problems that might arise for South Asian community members by finding strength and identity with a South Asian

way of life. They find strength in maintaining links with relatives on the Subcontinent rather than with developing links outside their communities within the UK. This response should also encourage others to have a much greater understanding of South Asian religious beliefs and values within the school. Parents in this mode would ideally also like their children to go to schools that promoted, either, their own faith or else another faith rather than secular beliefs as well as the general school curriculum. However, their most conspicuous clash appeared to be with the wider society. It could be said that in this mode participants register "difference" without recognising "disjuncture". (These conceptual alternatives are described in more detail in chapter six).

(The material analysed in this mode complements material collected in Bangladesh in appendix six. It is useful to refer to this appendix as it can explain some of the attachments and identities that the Bangladeshi family has described).

Second mode: contradictory responses

5.5. This second mode of response alerts the reader to the pressures and tensions that can arise for South Asian communities living in or alongside a western society. As indicated in the previous mode there were clear differences between the participants' own values and beliefs and those in the wider society. These differences can create tensions in relation to education, religion, the expectations of family and community life, identity and involvement as well as the fundamental sense of "self". The respondents demonstrated different degrees of engagement with the wider UK society: some responding by avoiding the wider society as has been identified in the previous mode, yet in certain situations, for instance in relation to education this is not an option. There were also others who did want to integrate into the wider society more but without losing their sense of cultural identity, values and beliefs.

This second identified mode of response expresses a movement towards more integration but at the same time captures a sense of tension; here problems and difficulties are more pronounced than in the first mode. Here tensions relate to interacting in the wider UK society and synonymously with the school system. Difficulties are experienced at various levels due to fundamental differences in cultural expectations, about the meaning of education, the appropriateness of the curriculum in school and the teachings in the Mosques. Misunderstandings appear to stem from a lack of communication as well as a lack of knowledge for all parties.

This chapter starts by considering the way in which the interviewees and pupils felt challenged by the cross-cultural situations they faced. In the light of these more general predicaments, the school system is considered and compared to the Mosque. The themes identified for this mode are: *contradictory feelings and confusions, alternative priorities, religion and education, racism and otherness and the school and educational system.* All the interviewees apart from S3 (the radical Sikh) are present in this mode.

The differences between the UK and Pakistani and Bangladeshi educational systems, suggest that South Asian parents arriving in the UK face considerable challenges in terms of their knowledge and expectations of education. These differences are referred to in the interviews with the interviewees and pupils and also recorded in the appendices.

5.5.1. Identifying contradictory feelings and confusions

There were many comments form interviewees and pupils that reflected a general unease.

5.5.1.1.Concerns arose about not fitting in with the expectations in the wider society

B1 described how a Muslim identity created barriers to integration and socialising in the wider UK society. Different ways of life also involved different codes of behaviour. B1 explained that the reason why it is difficult to join in with the wider society was because:

B1: [The] culture is so different ...being a Muslim you can't go to night-clubs. You can't have boyfriends...

B1 like others expressed feelings of difference, being an outcast and embarrassed because of different beliefs and customs. When these feelings surfaced in the participants' lives their sense of difference could make them feel isolated as B1 mentions with reference to a social gathering: " I was the only Asian there". She explained that is not just appearance and rules that create this difference but also: It's this thing inside you; you feel different." Dealing with the difference could also make a person embarrassed: "I didn't open up and I pretended I had [things to do to avoid socialising]."

Psychological repercussions of being different and having different priorities could reinforce a sense of isolation that can be felt as a result of being "different". B2 explained:

B2: I find it a bit difficult to mix at times...you feel like an outcast...And I suddenly realised that they were treating me with kid gloves sort of thing...I feel it's hard. I find it a bit difficult to mix at times. When I'm at work and people ask if I'd like a drink or go to the pub; because they know I'm a Muslim that question doesn't always come- but you don't want them to ignore you. You do want them to ask you to come down to the pub because otherwise you feel an outcast.

Here then there is an indication that it is not just the way people felt in themselves but

also others' uncertainty about how to respond to them.

The language barrier can intensify these experiences of being different, as B1 explains:

B1: And there are other situations that result in feeling, ...they feel like an outsider. The reason they feel like an outsider is because of the language.

She went on to describe a situation in hospital where a Pakistani young woman did not realise that she could have Halal food as a consequence of her lack of knowledge of English and therefore she was just eating salads even though she had just given birth.

In the extract below the difference relates specifically to dress:

B1: If I was a Bangladeshi and not a Muslim I could mix in more...like some people say it doesn't restrict you but in a way it does because ...say it's a child's party and child's birthday party and you go in and say it's a summer's day and you see all these parents and they're there like in these tee-shirts.

However, this comment also identifies the complex task of clarifying whether cultural or religious practices should predominate that faces the communities. Therefore these differences relate to different aspects of daily life. This was accentuated by knowledge of what life was like in Bangladesh. B2 described the shock for Bangladeshis arriving in the UK where privacy dominates over communality.

B2: When they come to this country there's not that hustle and bustle they're used to like over there - people go out and see anybody they want – people are more indoors over here. And they're more private.

These cross-cultural complications are heightened in relation to child-rearing where different generations have different experiences and expectations. Interviewees felt ostracised for being "different" and observed that their children had expectations of freedom of expression that they had learnt from living in the UK society which may lead to clashes of ideas.

Contrasting cultural expectations could be represented in a conflict between self expression and cultural codes of behaviour. B3 was concerned about the confusion between parents and children because of freedom of expression, choice and financial independence which could be experienced by families living in the UK.

S: So he's [the participant's brother] become more assertive?

B3: Yes he is, he's very, very naughty.

S: So there's a confusion?

B3: It's, they're confused because if they were in Bangladesh he wouldn't do all these things. He needs to be good person for himself and if he got beat up one day he wouldn't do all these things and say all these stupid things at the school

or in the house. He wouldn't cause so much trouble for other people. He'd talk to them and they'd understand. So because he's in England he can say, he can call the police so that's the power children have and they're just spoilt with that...because in Bangladesh they know home is home and there is nowhere else to go. There is no help outside of the home...[Here] My brother can say fine I'm leaving home; they can say right I'm going now you don't listen to me, I'll go and live in a home.

This independence and difference in behaviour could cause a serious clash for young people in the community.

B3: They're [the young people] not being the ones we want them to be. And the community might feel you should do the way we want. And the children who have been brought up here they think: no we don't want to do that; we want to do what pleases me.

B2 elaborated on the confusions that can occur:

B2: So children who've been brought up here don't agree with [the strict up-bringing on the Subcontinent] they don't work well with that. I often had to force ...[my daughter] to go to the Mosque and she's fought all the way...so we had to talk to her teacher [at the Mosque]...I think children brought up in this country expect a lot of freedom of choice...parents are afraid...they want more control over their children's lives but they have less and less control.

P2 was able to relate to the difficulties he faced in relation to his experience as a youth himself:

P2: Being brought up and born in this country is quite difficult at times to actually adopt our rules and regulations...It's very difficult trying to keep your identity these days because there are so many influences out there...I mean I couldn't cope with our religion but you just have to...If you put those pressures on your children in their teens than you are going to have problems.

Cross-cultural problems were often indicated through words like; "difficult", "problem" and "worry" which arose frequently in relation to this area of concern and influenced parents to suggest that the schools ought for example to make their religious beliefs and practices more comprehensible to non-Muslims and Sikhs so that life in the wider society might be easier for them:

B2: It's difficult. I mean if you want to do your namas [prayers] on time there is no place to do it...you'd have to come home unless you talk personally to your head teacher of that school; or your employer...some people don't feel brave enough to do it.

This created concern for parents as registered by B2:

B2: We expect our children to listen to us and maybe stay in and not to go roaming around too much and we expect them to get on with their studies and respect their elders. I think they get a different picture outside of home... my daughter she thinks life is only about going out with her friends and shopping

and always watching TV all the time. And that's not what I want for her. I want her to remember to read the Koran and do her namas. But she thinks all those things are not important.

However there was also the problem that their expression of different cultural identities could cause hostile reactions. Reactions here then were somewhat contradictory.

As religion was such a prominent value among the communities contrasts with the values in a secular society were particularly pertinent. Both Islam and Sikh scriptures emphasise the importance of a spiritual and non-materialistic life and both Muslim and Sikh participants mentioned this priority. P2 stated that: "children don't want to see buildings or cars or wealth...they just want a good life...unfortunately people are very materialistic these days." The growth in materialism was seen as part of the influence of "the West". The participants also expressed a lack of affiliation with both the wider society and their communities at times. S2 criticised the community for being superficial and dishonest: of creating an appearance and denying the truth:

S2: The community seems to be one big show of front that everybody's living in this way.

Therefore although the communities were potentially a haven and retreat from the confusions that the wider culture presented, they were also constraining and demanding. The mother in FS4 (the fourth Sikh family) explained how it could feel like a parade ground and also how her in-laws decided what she could and could not

wear. P1 notes how parents are: "are always being judged by the community; by our own families; by our elders." Therefore parents' moves to adapt customs for their young could be heavily censored.

Furthermore generational differences also affected the concept of "openness" which was in itself particularly complex in this cross- cultural situation. There were contradictory beliefs about whether to express feelings or observe traditional customs relating to decorum. B2 realised this quandary:

B2: He [her brother] was visiting a family and they were dressed very formally dressed up in a suit and things.... But when he turned up he was a bit casual I would say but they would say scruffy. He thought they should meet him in his ordinariness – it's the wrong idea isn't it? And my brother ...didn't want to lie about it so he said he didn't always go all the time to Mosque. And my aunties and uncles were saying 'Come on, go with them, just show them that you're interested [in an arranged marriage]'. And he wanted to be honest and straight.

It is possible to identify several South Asian cultural expectations, religious beliefs and values that are incompatible with those in the wider UK society. In particular the sense of individualism and autonomy experienced within western cultures may relate to degrees of isolation that originate from an ideological, cultural belief in the importance of independence rather than interdependence. On an implicit level concepts of "tolerance", "belonging" and emotional security were words that the participants used to describe what a family should have. Correspondingly there was an implied criticism that UK culture allowed intolerance of family commitments and

left people lonely and isolated. However, the research does not attempt to assess the reality of these aspirations and beliefs but acknowledges that they are the ideals that community members aspire to.

Having discussed the cross-cultural confusions and dilemmas that the interviewees raised we now need to consider what confusions the pupils expressed.

5.5.1.2. Pupils

Pupils indirectly indicated there were underlying concerns that they wished to clarify and would at times turn to the researcher to ask for her assistance in answering them.

C6 (P): Miss, India and Pakistan are fighting about Kashmir *(sounding earnest and worried).*

S: I know all the time- it's hard isn't it.

C5 (B): Why are they fighting over Kashmir?

C6(P): Where I live.

Alternatively they wanted to assert where their priorities and concerns lay. The pupils' affiliation with their South Asian identity was expressed by the intensity of their concern to the extent that they clearly felt that the partition involved an injustice created by the British that they had to accommodate. This was conspicuous by the way one participant C6(P) talked of, "the British" and clearly did not identify with

that cultural identity. Knowledge of the war in Kashmir registered this Pakistani pupil's feelings of belonging to the conflict.

C6(P): It used to be West Pakistan and East Pakistan –we used to be…

C3(B): And there was a fight against Bangladesh and Pakistan.

C6(P): And Miss you know that Pakistan, India and Bangladesh could have been rich… but …the English people in the Victorian age, they took all the jewels – took it all.

C6(P) expressed little sense of detachment over this matter because he saw Kashmir as his home and added: "Where I live …" to the concern about Kashmir although he clearly lived in the UK. However, despite the disturbances in their homelands it became clear that these pupils felt more security and confidence in their origins than they did with their position as UK citizens. This is despite the fact that all but one were born in the UK.

By contrast the Sikh children had a different set of challenges to face being a minority. There was also less clarity for them about issues related to dress and codes of practice. C10 (S) notes: "It's not that strict but it's quite strict because my nan doesn't like it when I don't cover my arms and things like that; she does want me to wear what I should wear…she wants me to wear [traditional clothes] all the time but I don't want to, but only when I go to the Gurdwara."

There seemed to be considerable gaps between the two main contrasting influences in these pupils' lives and no particular person or place to address the disparities and problems that arose from cross-cultural situations.

5.5.2. Alternative priorities

As identified earlier, South Asian communities have other priorities apart from school education; the importance of family, community and religious life have already been elaborated upon in the discussion of mode one and mentioned earlier in the discussion of this mode. These other alternative priorities affect the communities' relationship with schools. In this section only adult interviewees' are given, again because none were identified in the pupils interviews.

P2 was aware of the huge difference in lifestyles and beliefs:

P2: Colour, religion, just our whole way of life is completely different to the western way of life...we have to follow a set of rules basically and that means towards our religion, our parents and even friends...it's very difficult at times... and possibly understanding of the way of life not only here but as well as Islamic and Pakistani side. It's very difficult for anyone unless you are a Muslim/Pakistani to understand.

He identified how the family and culture was crucial:

P2: The number one priority in our culture is our family because we're so close knit and that's it really to teach them [children] the family thing is very

important as well as everything else. It's like most religions – you are taught that your priorities are: your religion comes first then it's your parents and then it's your neighbours, and then it's to respect all religions-they keep on repeating which is a shame really.

He reinforced the understanding that Islamic classes were a priority:

P2: [The] Islamic side of things which is taken a lot more seriously and they tend to think that our Islamic side is a lot more important and it's a lot more disciplined, so it's more important.

By contrast P1 when asked what the priorities for parents were these days said that she felt it was education, but this still meant that cultural, religious education had to continue as well:

P1: At the moment again it's education... with the recent Ofsted report saying that Pakistani children are way down right, almost at the bottom and that's quite a priority. And there's maintaining the culture and the religion, keeping the children enclosed within those things.

Both the Pakistani spokesperson (P1) and member (P2) focused on the aspect of religion providing markers of identity and success, but this religious element was also related to a general communal context. P2 understood that:

P2: Success would be acknowledged in the community in terms of how much a person has done for their community as well as how well they've done financially and in terms of religious devotion. If you've got a business of some sort; if you're religiously involved with your religion, the local community would say that this person is doing so much for the community he will be respected, classed as successful.

P1 was also able to explain the difference between success in a western individualistic society and the success that the community would recognise:

P1: You've kept the family happy as well...because not just an individual can, you know it's a family thing.

She felt that parents were crucial to the confidence and well-being of their children and she felt that this support was as important as success at school:

P1: To be a successful person – um well I think they've got to be confident. They've got to have this confidence which again doesn't come easily because when you're a child there's always issues going on in your head and around you. Um confidence obviously the education is obviously going to help – again the guidance whether it's at school or at home. Support from your family I...although I won't say that parents are always right...I suppose you can look at success very differently... I mean to one family success may be whether their son or daughter had completed the Koran you know and gone on to do Islamic studies. To another family it could be just that their child has

simply gone to college. And to another that they've gone to university and then they've gone on further and become a doctor or whatever so it depends upon whatever... Yes I'm just trying to think of a word in our own language that would um ...I can't think what it would be ...um...something that would I mean the English wouldn't be one word – it would be – satisfying how – it would be like being satisfied with what you are doing – you know you find it rewarding - I think again it would be on both sides on the religious and the academic side. I think it could be something that is rewarding for you – and that you've kept your family happy as well because that comes in to it because not just an individual can – you know it's a family thing. You're doing something that they will be happy with and you will as well.

Ultimately she suggested that the word "fulfilled" could replace the word success:

P1: I'm just trying to think of a word...um 'fulfilled' but there again you have to see what the parents and what the person themselves want.

However this interviewee clearly had difficulty with the word "success" and her description certainly doesn't match with that of the school/ Ofsted. The replies given by this interviewee occurred early on in the research and demonstrate the inadequacy of the researcher's initial concepts and categories in focussing solely on the notion of success.

5.5.3. Religion and education

It was also clear from the earlier excerpts that Islam was integrated into the concept of communality and family life.

5.5.3.1. Interviewees

P1 explained the importance of learning about Islam early in life because it is so complex:

P1: It's basically to have the knowledge of Islam and I think you can never get too much...[there is] always so much to learn about it...It starts at a young age; parents start instilling these things into you at a young age... because it can get too late when they are seventeen or eighteen to understand. You know you can go through all the younger years feeling totally isolated and thinking you know why [you are a] Muslim and you know issues around. You know there are a lot of dos and don'ts and rights and wrongs that are involved and I think those who understand Islam more, they can put the rights and wrongs in the right places. For them to be able to understand why do our parents not let us do this and you know find their boundaries.

However, there were differences and disagreements about education in the Mosque. In response to the question on strictness in the Mosque from the researcher, P1 answered:

P1: The reason is that they often have many children at one time and they've got one Imam teaching a good deal ... so obviously there's got to be some

strictness there. Part of the practice you know comes back from Pakistan where they're teaching those methods there. ...Obviously [here] they've had a day at the school and then they go to the Mosque for one or two hours. Obviously it's a long day – they are shattered basically. They go into the Mosque and if they go to the Koran they know what page they are on and they'll go there, sit down, get to the page and start reading. And then when their time comes then they'll either go up to the Imam or he'll come to them. He'll listen to them and he'll move them forward and they'll go on to the next page and so on.

However, the Bangladeshi and Pakistani members (B2 and P2) both commented on changes in the Mosque due to children's experience of school. The Bangladeshi member felt that rules are conspicuous in the Mosque and not compatible with children's expectations and needed to be changed:

B2: Teachers in the Mosque...expect children to listen straight away; not answer back and if the children do answer back they'll be scolded... we had to talk to them [the teachers in the Mosque that the children] need everything explained to them-not forced down their throat or anything like that.

P2 endorsed this concern about cultural clashes. However, change can be threatening for parents as B2 mentions:

B2: Children brought up in this country expect a lot of freedoms from their parents.... A lot of parents are afraid of those things and they want more control over the children's lives but they have less and less control.

P1 also recognised the difference between Islamic studies and the pedagogy in the Mosque. This difference also underlies a difference between the school and Mosque pedagogies.

P1: I don't know much about the Islamic studies because I've never been to one. But I know the teachers they have there would have more knowledge of the teaching methods used in schools. So I think they would be slightly more relaxed and they would have much smaller classes as well. And then I think that's because it's Islamic studies and there is more of a questioning – so more of a structured class. Whereas learning the Koran they go away and they're basically just sitting there reading through... And it works – it works!

P1's comment seemed somewhat contradictory. On the one hand she appeared to appreciate the more relaxed attitude in the Islamic studies and on the other expressed enthusiasm about the results of a more strict, uncompromising approach in the Mosque. There were not only pedagogic differences but also underlying differences between different approaches to Islam. The Pakistani member (P2) also voiced some criticism of fanaticism between differences between sects and suggested again that there was a two-way interaction:

P2: Yes it is a lot more fanatical here. I mean there are two Mosques here in ... the main two Mosques and they 're always conflicting because in every religion every one preaches differently. You know among Muslims there are so many different sects, that we all preach differently.

These issues of diversity at several levels, in relation to pedagogy, location, the religion itself and then in contrast to a Western approach present complex problems for parents to consider. There are indications that there is much debate and difference of opinion among the Muslim population including the difference between the Bangladeshi Mosque and the Pakistani Mosques.

Sikh parents were also confronted with difficult decisions from their different position. S1 raised some of these issues:

S1: Muslims – when their children are born from day one there are certain procedures that they go through...Very clearly laid out and the children know what the procedures are and they know that this is what makes them Muslim. But in the Sikh community there isn't that. The children will just have to gradually grow into their religion...we [Sikh parents] try to teach them to the pray but then there's problems because again with Muslims from a very early age they're taught how to read the Koran and Sikh children are not necessarily...Unless there's a very devout Sikh; like although we call ourselves Sikhs we can't actually – because in order to be devout we have to

take our vows. And if we have taken our vows then within our vows we have a duty to teach our children about Sikhism.

S1 explains that there is a fear that some people come to the Gurdwara with less commitment than others and:

S1: It's so easy for you to lose your identity. I can see in the rooms downstairs- you can see people who've come to the Gurdwara because they've been asked or invited, you can see those completely aside from those who want to be there.

However she hoped that: " [The] Giani [Sikh priest] ...from India ...can teach us about the Granths [holy book] and really lay down the foundation for our identity. "

S1 recognises that her children's links with a Sikh culture are more tenuous than her own or her parents. S2 also expressed concern that her children had less knowledge and understanding of Sikhism than she would like and that:

S2: Ways are kind of disappearing...like at the time when we got married; everything was like arranged marriages and nowadays you hear things about people marrying outside religion and they make you think...it's a worry.

Pupils

5.5.3.2. The Muslim pupils that were interviewed talked of the meaning of life being embodied in faith as we have already noted in mode one. However, in comparison

with school these pupils felt that the Mosque was more important because it offered a sense of meaning to the whole of their lives. They were eager to describe the order and expectations of learning in the Mosque. However their enthusiasm and dedication as expressed below must also be understood in the context of racism as expressed above by the interviewees and also earlier in relation to their comments about the locality. These pupils were delighted to have the opportunity to talk about their religion but it also separated them from others.

C5 (B): The Mosque is the most important [in comparison with school]... Cos you get to go – when you die you get to go to heaven... Yeh so that means we're praying to go to heaven...

C3(B): In the first time when you finish the Koran or Sufara or Hyda you have to give out food – that's what we call Shinli.

There was also great status attached to going to Mecca: "Oh it's beautiful." was the response of one pupil C6 (P) who had had the fortune to go there.

Fear of the Shitan [devil] and respect for Allah made rules and tests in life meaningful so that in another sense the school and Mosque were seen in parallel: "It's like tests- like the Shitan making.. Like the Shitan and Allah. So they've got these competitions. How much people go to heaven...It depends if they're a good or bad person."

However the meanings of religious tests for life was related to being good, working hard and to please God. These factors appeared to offer a powerful incentive for the pupils:

C7 (P): It's a good deed, like it's hard work to be a Muslim, it's really, really hard, I reckon it's the hardest religion to have to be five times a day. You have to go to school; go to the Mosque; you have a really long day and a really long week.

S: So why do you do all this?

C9 (P): Because we do it to please our God.

C7 (P): Allah.

C8(P): This is not a real life really; Allah is seeing if – whether we're proper Muslims or if we're not then I don't know what happens.

C7 (P): This life is a practice – it's like Allah just likes seeing if you're good in this life and then sending you to heaven or hell. It's so that you can learn it for when you get older and when you go to Hadj you can know what to wear and things like that.

C8(P): It's proud to be a Muslim and it's a good deed and if you do something wrong you can be forgiven because you can go to the Mosque.

However the meaning of life offered by Islam also appeared to confuse some sometimes pupils about those who did not have a religion.

C3(B): Christians – not all Christians – some English people, they don't believe in their God... Some are non- believers... They should always believe in their God...

C5(B): In Muslim like you've got strict rules like you have to be proper Muslim to go to heaven. In Christian life they could do whatever they want.

It seemed clear from these types of comments that the pupils understood others including the school through their initial understanding of life conveyed through their religious upbringing. Learning about prayer also involved the whole family:

C9 (P): Like I do it at home and my dad he has to learn it all.

Prayer books claimed a particular respect:

C8(P): The difference between this school and the Mosque as well is that if you lose the books you have to pay one pound to get a new one or something. So that 's like gold.

C9 (P): Five pounds for losing the Koran and if you get it back you have to kiss it.

C7 (P): It's like sent from Allah to Mohammed.

Learning languages appeared to be the link between home and Mosque. Language then had a symbolic value as a passport to the Subcontinent. Hindi and Urdu are constantly on the TV. Pupils were enthusiastic about their bilingual skills.

C3(B): I can speak Hindi proper. I watch a lot of Hindi films...

C5(B): Ah we've got a Pakistani- we've got a digital –so we've got a Pakistani channel and it's Arabic.

S: Do you learn Urdu in the Mosque?

C10 (P): Yes.

C5 (B): I read Bengali – cos we've got this Bengali class.

C10 (P): I read Arabic.

It was clear that these pupils had other priorities apart from their school careers. They also had the complication of having to interpret the considerably different cultural worlds that existed at school and home. Their situation could be complicated further

because their parents were not necessarily knowledgeable about school life and expectations within the school.

Furthermore, the Sikh pupils were not able to eulogise about their religion and cultures for reasons already raised by the Sikh parents in relation to the more liberal and less routine practices and beliefs of their religion. They had less knowledge of Sikhism as their involvement with their Gurdwaras was less predictable. They also expressed a concern about being in a minority and relatively isolated:

C11 (S): It's like in this school there are lots of Pakistanis and I feel the odd one out.

Also, in relation to choice of secondary school. C(10) S commented:

C10(S): I want to go to ...school ...there's Sikhs...there's more Sikhs there.

5.5. 4. Racism and otherness

Interviewees in general felt that the challenge of living in a very different western society made it essential for children to understand their cultures and religions well. (P1) explains why it is important for the children to have a good understanding of Islam as well as their cultural identity due to feelings of isolation, that can be created by a sense that people do not understand your world.

P1: [They need] Somebody who understands their culture and religion...then they don't feel isolated.

She also realised that the differences were due to people's different perceptions and prejudice. She also acknowledged the way in which Islam is perceived and how that can impact upon a child's identification with their religious identity:

P1: Children don't want to say, 'I'm a Muslim' because there are stereotypical images and negative images of Muslims...They might not want to be open...because of racism...They [children] need a lot of ...things [apart from just learning the Koran]...for them to grow up feeling confident and proud...to be able to understand why parents do not let you do this and you know find their boundaries...There's grey areas as well, so they need to explore that.

P2 reinforced this understanding that racism and feeling outcast made knowledge about ethnic/religious identity essential.

P2: When you do go out there and when you do have to face these racial problems even it's very difficult. You think well after all colour matters as they say – it matters – it makes the difference... It makes a huge – I think it makes all the difference. I mean I've had a lot of conversations on the phone and then I've gone to this certain place and then they've looked at me and thought that's not him ...and it hurts – it does hurt.

He also understood that the experience of racism encouraged young people to retain

their cultural values and beliefs:

P2: I think the younger generation have actually started to realise that – regardless of – you know we can be as English as we can but we won't be accepted regardless so why not follow your own religion. Which keep everyone – your community...and you'll have an identity at the same time saying this is what we are.

Pupils

The pupils also expressed a concern that there was some prejudice in the wider society about their beliefs and practices. Their reservations about being UK citizens was emphasised by their concern about racism, and indicated a certain lack of identification with the location they lived in, and was also expressed as a fear of Islamaphobia.

S: Right so you like living here in [this area]?

C3(B), C5(B), C9(P): Yeh - it's alright.

C3(B): It's a bit rough.

C5(B): Yeh [reference to this locality] is not a good area cos...

C9(P): Violence.

C5(B): There's loads of like rules about how Muslims are like and that stuff. And they beat up – they sometimes kill the Muslims – the Christians...Cos you know the police, do you know they police they don't do nuffin'. Police don't care, they don't know what is happening, they blame it on the Muslims.

This experience of being identified as different from the wider society introduced problems as well as sense of importance.

Interviewees

Although the pupils did not articulate the complex situation they experienced of living in a close knit communities and also being identified as different in the wider society P3 identified problems for young people living under the eyes of the communities. She was respectful of the importance of Islam and despite her experience of mixing with western friends she did not relish the idea of their social life:

P3: Being aware of the religion and how it helps us to lead a good life, it doesn't mean that if you socialise with other white people that you turn out to be one of them and go out clubbing. You must always be aware that you're Muslim as well and you stick to your values and culture.

P3 was also though quite scathing of the insularity of her community. She would rather people mixed more.

A religious and community focus was crucial in terms of what parents wished for their children's well-being and also education in life. However managing this

socialisation presented challenges for not only the parents but the children. Furthermore these concerns with developing self esteem, as well as maintaining collective rather than individual responsibilities contrast with the school's focus on individual pupil's successful results in National Curriculum tests.

Interestingly, the parents' concerns might have been to some degree alleviated if they had heard what the pupils had to say about their religion when they were interviewed in a school setting as recorded above.

5.5.5. The school and educational system

Although pupils had voiced some particular comments about experiences in school these have been noted already. Thus only adult interviewees are included here.
Both Sikh and Muslim parents voiced concerns about the limitations of the school in terms of their needs and identity. RS2 (who was not an interviewee but one of the original Sikh community representatives see Appendix one) had been educated in India up until the age of nineteen had greater respect for education in India; she felt that languages, maths and theory were taught more effectively out there. P1 was also able to identify stresses related to the different experience and knowledge parents may have. Both the parents and pupils in the UK South Asian community were very aware of the difference between the educational systems in the UK and those on the Subcontinent. This is what P1 had to say:

P1: I think parents tend to see the school system [in relation to their knowledge of the Pakistani system]... Out there not many schools have parental involvement and those are probably schools that follow...[the] English system and those

are usually private schools. So parents don't usually have involvement. They [do however] have involvement with their children's work at home; they get a lot of homework out there, and parents will make sure they'll get through those and they'll help if they can. I think they have the same thought here.

P1 understood that the parents have a definite priority for the teaching of the Koran by contrast to teaching at school, in part because of their own priority for religious education as well as the parents' lack of knowledge of the school curriculum:

P1: How do they [Pakistani parents] question something they don't know about?

Furthermore she understood that the parents did not feel they had the knowledge to be involved in the school education:

P1: Not a fear but almost a reluctance because they think oh these are all teachers; they know what they are doing and because parents feel we don't know.

As noted earlier she also noted the pressure for parents and communities now, after Ofsted has said that Pakistani children are doing badly at school:

P1: You know [they are] almost at the bottom ...and there's maintaining the culture and the religion.

P1 also felt that some parents were very involved although they had very particular interests.

P1: They know the children need be good at Maths English and Science...the other subjects they don't often, [they] are not too fussed about things like Music or P.E, Geography. It's only English, Maths and Science that they think they need to know and that they need to keep up with.

It is interesting how this understanding coincides with teacher M's understanding. Furthermore, the lack of consideration for South Asian cultures within the curriculum, mentioned below by B1 is also similar to both teachers' criticism of the ethnocentricity of the National Curriculum.

B1 was concerned about the dominance of British culture and history within the educational system:

B1: When our children go to school they just learn about the western things like whether it's history or whether it's English. It's all to do with like western culture; nothing to do with like Bangladeshi culture. I mean if an English child knew in depth the values and how important a culture is. If they told them ...that a Muslim girl has to cover her head; she has to wear appropriate dressing that has to go to ankles and has to cover her arms and they're not allowed to drink at all – it's haram for them to drink. That they can't enter pubs ... and you have this thing about explaining, explaining, explaining.

B1 realised that the focus on a "British" curriculum reinforced an ignorance of her own culture. This was also the case for S2 who, though enthusiastic about the

school her children attended, had hopes of Sikhism within the curriculum and as it was not there feared for her children's lack of knowledge of their roots and identity.

S2: I'm quite happy with the education, the only thing that worries me is the outside Sikh education and it would be great if they could have that at the school.

Furthermore this lack of cultural input was compounded by a lack of representation of South Asian staff membership in the school. S1 expressed concern that the school did not acknowledge the importance of role models:

S1: Although they've got quite a large percentage of Asian and ethnic minorities...There aren't any Black or ethnic minority teachers there...no real role models...You are failing your ethnic minorities because you haven't supplied that...You think Sikhs are very thick because they can't get anywhere.

RS2 (who was not an interviewee but one of the original community representatives as mentioned earlier see Appendix one) was also cynical about teacher and school prejudice and stereotyping of South Asian pupils; she felt it was useless to complain. Her experience clearly identified instances of institutional racism. However, despite these realisations P1 did feel that nowadays teachers generally were more aware of other cultures including Islam. She also felt that there was more knowledge about other religions in the syllabus:

P1: I know in the primary school they have the religious education...once in the year they may touch on Islam ...again that's their interpretation of it. Which is fine, I mean our children obviously have a bit more knowledge ...and in those times [past] people weren't so aware as they are now. Teachers ...make themselves more aware – find out more – talk to people to get a better view of it, so that they're not giving a view that may put down children in the class.

It is also important to remember that these particular interviewees were the more articulate members of their communities and were relatively knowledgeable about the school system themselves. As such they could also offer some explanation for the behaviour and misunderstandings of others.

These interviewees also identified the way young people could be inhibited by their parents. The respondent P1 suggested that the situation improved at 'A' level when young people were more confident and took responsibility whatever their parents did or said:

P1: At the age when parents can influence their children, maybe push the children, I think that is when the children tend to slack. I think when they get older they start becoming more confident and start knowing what they want...if they get enough encouragement and support, or even without it in some families.

P1 also acknowledged the different expectations in relation to gender that the communities had:

P1: Boys do go out with parents' knowledge because it isn't considered so dangerous for boys...boys are encouraged more [to be educated] because they are going to be the breadwinners.

She also mentioned how the community can make matters more heated for a family if their daughter wants to study away from home:

P1: Communities don't help because they'll come out with stories that my daughter went and she was away for three years and then she never came back.

However, she also suggested that young women were becoming more assertive about what they wanted to do. "And she may say well I definitely want to go [to college or university]." And also that mothers are learning to talk fathers around to the idea. "Mothers will then try and talk the fathers round ...Again it's looking at the benefits for the daughters that – you know, if they are having an arranged marriage then if they've got an educated daughter then they are going to get an educated son-in-law."

Another area that was touched on and which illustrated conflicting responses was the role of parents and PTAs. P2 was aware that circumstances coupled with limited knowledge of the school' expectations disadvantaged parents and their children.

P2: The problem is that the only reason that they [parents] don't get involved the way they should do is because the man is always working. He puts everything on the wife and the wife might not even understand English but she has to attend the parent's evenings or let's say festivals, any concert or anything social in the school. But the father's always working so he's not really informed; all he does look at is the school report and whether it's good or bad and either they'll get punished [the children] or whatever. It's very sad.

However, B2 argued that it was not the parents who were at fault but the school system. She described the anxieties and embarrassment that parents faced at PTA meetings:

B2: My neighbours across the road they don't usually go because of the language problem. They have been and ...it's been very difficult for them and they've just wanted to go home...they wanted to say things to the teachers but they just couldn't...maybe [also] feeling very odd because people were looking at the way they were dressed...[also] when they talked, they talked with an accent and everyone was looking at them...They were so embarrassed at that meeting.

This comment illustrates how the general sense of isolation that participants voiced earlier in relation to their relationship with the wider society can be intensified and reinforced by their experiences in the school.

Several interviewees mentioned that the language barrier created severe challenges for parents when their children were identified by the school as problematic, and intensified the sense of cross-cultural misunderstandings.

B3: It's the language. And my mother is suffering so much ...it's very difficult. My brother is very naughty sometimes and gets beaten up [outside school] and he doesn't go to school for a few days...my mum [and dad] they can't understand why this situation is like this.

However these educated interviewees were well aware of the disadvantages that South Asian parents faced in terms of a lack of knowledge of the UK educational system and its lack of interest in educating children about other cultures and religions. They were aware of the ignorance in both camps and the conflicts with school in terms of their own desire for more cultural knowledge about South Asia to be disseminated within school. They were able to extend upon some of the insights that the pupils provide. However, parents could also suffer at the other end of their children's lack of respect towards them because of their ignorance of the educational system. RS4 (one of the initial Sikh community representatives, see Appendix one) explained how children could be resentful towards their parents. Parents could therefore face criticism from both the school and their own children in terms of their ignorance, which was very difficult for them to bear.

Also despite their awareness that the pupils faced considerable pressure to achieve both at school and in the Mosque they felt it was essential for them to have knowledge of the latter to ensure a confident cultural and self identity. Although some

parents and children appeared to be aware of disparities between the school's priorities and their communities', and were also able offer revelatory insights, they expressed a concern that their own Islamic identity was not clearly understood by the school. Thus the parents and pupils in this mode indirectly and directly expressed conflicts and tensions related to their very different focus which left them with an unresolved situation. It is clearly essential to understand the importance of the pupils' and parents' religious beliefs and cultural practices to realise how and where the school system fits into their lives. Both the parents and the pupils were aware of the educational systems on the Subcontinent and were interested in maintaining their cultural and religious knowledge, and this formed a context for their school experiences.

The material analysed reveals the different concerns, which the participants raised. Sikh parents expressed a different degree of concern about the continuation of their religion and culture, as a minority within a minority living in a secular society with a secular education system.

By comparison with the interviews with the teachers, it became evident that parents and teachers are constrained by different "rulebooks" i.e. the moral and religious training of children as represented in the Mosques and religious doctrines and the National Curriculum as represented in the school. It is also important to register that teachers' and parents' confidence is affected by their knowledge of the agendas within these rulebooks as well as their access to these sources of knowledge. Therefore a Pakistani parent being more conversant with the meanings in the Koran would be able to discuss this matter with more confidence than s/he would the National Curriculum

and vice versa for the teacher. However, the Koran and Guru Gransab [Sikh holy book] are not the only sources of meaning and knowledge for the community; cultural knowledge and experience of the Subcontinent are also dimensions that the parents are familiar with (as was seen earlier).

Pertinent issues identified were that the teachers had limited time to access the community and parents, and the parents may not be aware of the ways in which the school expects them to get involved and invariably do not see themselves as part of the educational system but rather as responsible for the pastoral and moral care of their own children.

Briefly in relation to the contrast between educational systems in the UK and on the Subcontinent there does appear to be another clash between reflective and pragmatic pedagogic ambitions, testing versus depth of understanding. This difference is reflected in the contrast between the government policies and on the Subcontinent the academics' beliefs and aspirations about learning (as detailed in the appendix six) and in this sense corresponds to tensions that exist in the UK between policy- makers and teachers. The educational system in Bangladesh, as recorded in the appendix can thus serve as an example of a context that may create certain expectations for UK based South Asian parents.

There are also a series of concerns that parents raised that suggested that the school system could reinforce the sense of difference and confusion that existed for them in the wider UK society. However, mode three identifies ways in which certain

respondents have addressed some of the cultural clashes and contradictions raised in this mode, and have resolved them.

Third mode: dynamic responses

5.6. This third mode of response is dominated by the views of the two radicals P3 (Pakistani) and S3 (Sikh), as well as the Sikh interviewees. These interviewees demonstrated the movement and development typical of a bicultural position and in general showed less affirmation of the more traditional elements of their cultures of origin. Some pupils were also flexible and imaginative in some of their responses.

The themes identified for this mode are: *Similarities with westerners, religion, education, identity and racism* and *synthesis.* This mode also includes an in depth study of the radical Sikh's (S3) views as she draws upon a range of ways in which to address cross-cultural challenges.

The radical S3 who is the only interviewee to demonstrate only one mode of response provides an example of independence and South Asian identity combined. In many ways S3 is not representative of the perspectives of the Sikh community in this urban area. She is a professional and has lived in various cities in the UK before settling in this locality. This radical was born in the UK and lived in a similar Sikh community to the one in this fieldwork. However, she broke away from her family and has travelled and lived in India and found her own husband who is Hindu. She is critical of the limitations of school and the small-mindedness of the communities. However, despite her criticisms of both she made a conscious decision to live in this area. She is a creative person, writing and painting in her spare time. She hold strong views and acts independently of the communities.

S3 introduced herself as Indian, Sikh and Black to represent the cultural, religious and political positions she identifies with.

S3: First thing I would like to say is that I am an Indian and also that as far as my religion is concerned I'm Sikh...There's a lot of identities about being an Indian. The fact that my skin is brown and the fact that I've been born in Britain and then there's the culture and then there's my relationship with Britain because I am a Black person in Britain so there's lots of relationships to India. And part of being a Sikh is that it is just one of many religions in India.

However, members and spokespeople are also present in this mode. Although the dynamic responses of this third mode are less common among the communities, when they do occur they can have a powerful impact. People demonstrating this mode have the capacity to parody, recreate and synthesize a variety of influences in their environment and cultures. They invariably discreetly yet confidently challenge the limitations of their communities, and independently select the elements of their identity they wish to preserve and those they wish to avoid or reject. Their independence of mind may have evolved through their experiences with problems both with their communities and the wider society. However they invariably refer to education as crucial to their development. Although this third mode can be seen to align with a radical attitude overall, B3, the radical Bangladeshi is not present because her expression of radicalism was an ability to exist outside her Bangladeshi community but not in the wider society. She did not synthesize a western and South Asian way of life but expressed a different response from others in her community.

Interviewees still strongly affiliate with their own cultural identity and do not see themselves as British in terms of the deeper meanings of their identity but none of these participants avoid mixing with other communities including White and they can be very critical of their own community. One respondent S3 ignores the importance of dress and abhors what she sees as the authoritarian, patriarchal control of Elders. However, she emphasises the sophistication of the beliefs and values of an eastern culture and sees western ideology as predominately immature and relatively shallow.

There is some predominance of Sikh views in this mode and this may relate to the fact that the Sikh religion embeds contradictory elements both within its ideology and practices; one Sikh ideal is "freedom of choice" and therefore there is a challenge to conformity within their beliefs and always the potential to express an individual and personal approach. However as we have already seen Sikhs can demonstrate other responses as well (as in the modes one and two).

5.6.1. Similarities with westerners

Those most independently minded i.e. those demonstrating a dynamic integrative response consciously select and integrate elements from eastern and western cultural sources. However, the way autonomy and independence of mind is negotiated and understood is not the same as some forms of western understanding: it does not suggest total freedom of expression nor an indifference to cultural codes of practice. The participants retain a commitment to certain responsibilities and loyalties that are embedded in the meaning of their South Asian cultural identity.

5.6.1.1. Interviewees

The interviews with Sikh academics carried out on the Subcontinent (see Appendix six) confirm that Sikhism allows a certain freedom of interpretation and expression of devotions. As S2 comments:

S2: Sikhism, it's not very intense – like it's up to the individual how they take their religion. So you'll get the westernised versions of Sikhism – people who will cut their hair and wear the westernised clothes.

S1 and S2 register that Sikh beliefs focused upon the importance of personal choice, and the way in which they expressed themselves indicated that they had a sense of autonomy in terms of the decisions they reached and also reflective awareness that they also recognised is a strength and freedom for them.

Furthermore, S2 felt no desire or obligation to be involved with her community. She said that she would discuss issues with her close relatives she saw the community as: " one big show of front." Sikhism therefore allowed S1 and S2 to feel more autonomous than Islam as represented in this particular locality. This also allowed S1 and S2 to circulate freely with other groups in society if they wished to and S1 found her own connections with other communities. For instance as a nurse she observed that White working classes can also have an extended family, who resents outsiders:

S1: She [a health visitor friend] often talks of the fact that they've got their grandparents who tell them about bottle-feeding and breast-feeding. The

health visitor is like an intruder, everyone relies heavily on their extended family.

P2 rather than expressing any affinity with any particular cultural group in the wider society, apart from his Pakistani -Muslim identity, recommends an openness to others in general:

P2: You have to be broad-minded, I mean you have to be aware because the Asian community doesn't just consist of Muslims, it consists of other Indians: Sikhs, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans even. Although we speak more or less the same language – we've got the same sort of similar values. To me my community is not just the Muslim community or the Pakistani – I respect all – as well as the English and Black community. We have to try to work together – but it doesn't always work sometimes.

5.6.1.2. The pupils

The pupils demonstrated ways of resolving differences generated by cultural differences in general in the wider society and in political/social situations and to some extent identified with westerners. In an attempt to resolve uncertainties about the war in Kashmir and the partition as well as relationships of their countries of origin with the UK, they suggested the following:

C5(B): But England's people though they forgot about it though cos they're friends now...Cos there's no point, there's no point um fighting about it now, cos it's gone already now...

S: You get on with them?

C5(B): Yeh.

S: With English people?

C3(B): Yeah.

As far as C5 (B) and C3 (B) were concerned it was time to move on. They were pleased to mention neighbours or contacts outside their community that they engaged positively with.

C5(B): I got a neighbour; she's really kind she gives us flowers loads of time. She's really kind. Because – while she was on holiday – we gave her waste – what do you call it- .. the dustbin men um he cleaned it – because we look after her dustbin – she gave us a flower once....She's an English person.

C3(B): In my house; my dad used to have this friend called Martin who was Jamaican or Somalian or something ...every week he used to get us chocolate and his wife used to bring us these presents.

Furthermore, the Sikh pupils being in the minority often had a range of friends from different backgrounds and cultures.

S: Are your friends Sikhs as well?

C10(S): No

S: Ah right...

C10(S): They're almost all English.

Though all these South Asian pupils expressed a strong identification with their home upbringing and its priorities, they also expressed a desire to accommodate the requirements of both school and home. Many of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils were also skilled and confident about their bilingual abilities:

C1(B): Sometimes I will speak English and sometimes I will speak Bengali.

This openness suggests a certain degree of self-confidence, possibly based in a clear sense of identity. One aspect of a South Asian identity that interviewees expressed clarity about and confidence in was their religious identity.

5.6. 2. Religion

Here responses are limited to adult interviewees. S1 notes how Sikhism's strength (in contrast to expectations that she understand exist within Islam that Muslims will adopt certain prescriptive practices), is in allowing people to decide for themselves how and in what ways they will observe Sikhism:

S1: I was never forced into it [Sikhism] that's probably why I've got clearer ideas about what I am doing and where I want to go in terms of religion.

S1 values the importance of choice in relation to Sikhism:

S1: When people actually turn to it then it's going to be because they've actually turned to it- because they actually want to – rather than because they've been indoctrinated.

However, the radical Pakistani, who is Muslim, also found her own way of translating Islam and offered a different perspective to prayer and fatality than others in her family and the Muslim communities. She stated that she was: "Not using God to get good marks...I mean what's the point, I mean he's going to die now so what's the use of praying. The only reason I'd pray was not to make him better [her brother was dying of cancer] but ... take him away more quickly...to ease the pain." This was quite a different attitude from the rest of the family. In this sense she did not allow others to inhibit her expectations of conformity but felt free to develop her own interpretations of life. She was also aware of the constraints that Elders could impose and wished to offer her younger relatives a greater sense of freedom. Although P3 had respect for her Elders and certain traditions she understood that certain rules were unnecessarily rigid and left the younger generation unheard and repressed.

P3: When you're younger you're invited to parties and things...and you do want to go ...but your parents will say no...you shouldn't be mixing and that you

will end up eating something you shouldn't...and then you have to cover up your disappointment.

P3 felt that she could offer her younger relatives more understanding and ignored the limitations of her Elders on certain issues " Most of my cousins come to me for advice. But I don't think their parents like it."

5.6.3. Education

5.6.3.1. Interviewees

S1 recognised, that being successful within education gives the potential to enhance self-esteem and cultural identity. S1 works harder at ensuring her children do their homework than at teaching them the Bpath [hymns and prayers] and Granthsab [holy book].

S1: Although I may want to sit and read the Granthsab for fifteen minutes or so, I won't force them to come and sit down with me but I will force them to do their homework.

S2 also clearly articulated the tensions that she would have to resolve and suggested that education was a way forward for her and her children:

S2: Because living in England we have to...get an education to be living in England and to get ahead more...we're living two lives; we're living an Asian life and an English life.

She was also aware that the younger generation will " want answers".

P2 was conscious that things were changing despite the initial lack of knowledge that parents had of school education.

P2: It is changing, it's changing because I'm seeing a lot [more] of my children's work and their reports [than his mother did].

Education was also recognised by Muslim Pakistanis and Bangladeshi to be a way in which to develop skills and knowledge and to transcend the disadvantages and cross-cultural tensions that they had experienced. P1 explained how her Pakistani women's group developed out of the women's desire to know and learn more:

P1: The women want to know more, want to learn more...They said: we want jobs; we want to learn there's nowhere we can go – where do we go? We want to learn training; we want to learn computing, we want to learn, to do courses, we want to better ourselves so that we can get out there.

P3 had focused on education as a way of challenging the expectations of women within her community:

P3: I wanted to show everybody that it's not just the men who can go to college.

P3 was proud of her independence and initiative as a student who had gained a degree despite the odds. She expressed the confusions around a strict upbringing that she felt could provide children with a clear training and guidelines for the future:

P3: Strictness [reference to the Mosque] and obviously you go to the Mosque to learn Islam and you go to the school to learn all the other usual things.

Yet she also recognised the need for her community to be more broad-minded and to circulate much more in the outside world. She was well aware of prejudice and barriers that her own community could provide in terms of mixing with other cultural groups and also in terms of gender. She was glad that there were other individuals in the community who stood up for themselves independently. She considered that for a child to become successful s/he would need:

P3: A good education and being able to socialise with other ethnic minorities – not just their own kind. Because I've noticed most Pakistani girls tend to stick to their own kind and I don't like that.

P3 also expressed a dislike for the insular nature of the community and made no pretence about the prejudices that existed. She recognised the importance of: "being able to mix with other ethnic minorities [in school]. The Mosque can't do that. There you're there with your own kind...it could be seen as racism."

P3 felt confident enough to forge a different way ahead for herself despite community pressures:

P3: Well for me I was just very interested in education but there was no one there for me, to help me – I just had to do it all myself...I'm the odd one out – I don't know why? ...I was student of the year at my college and everyone was shocked because I'm pretty shy and that I got that for two years and that I go to Uni...women can do it on their own as well and can be independent."

She felt that the Muslim community was not really interested in women's education but she was determined not to become a housewife.

S: You're not going to be a housewife?

P3: No way.

Thus P3 was able to take an independent approach and recognise that this can work. However, she still retained a loyalty for her own community despite their insularity.

5.6.3.2. Pupils

The pupils raised another range of issues relating to cross-cultural differences when they discussed schooling in the UK in comparison to schooling on the Subcontinent. They appeared to be more able to accept the differences and potential contradictions than some of the interviewees had voiced in the previous mode.

Some of the pupils interviewed felt that education is stricter and that there is more discipline in their countries of origin. They said, that here in the UK:

C7(P): It's a lot easier than Pakistan...cos [in] Pakistan they have to read Urdu...plus they don't have playtimes and when they come in the morning and when the teacher's not here, they just play and the teacher says to come back to the classroom and they just come back...they're more strict about learning.

However, homework [in Bangladesh] seemed less like homework when it did occur. As C5 (B) put it: "It's not like work, but we always, my cousins, we always read everyday at home and in the night cos it's better to learn." They also seemed to respect the strictness and hard work or were impressed by it:

C2(B): I heard that the G.C.S.Es in Bangladesh are harder than in England... They do three subjects – English, Bengali and Arabic and then they have a test on all three of them.

In general their respect for this system seemed to be related to a sense of identification with it. It was tied to their world and knowledge.

However, although they were aware of rules in the school, they realised there were still more in the Mosque:

C1(B): There are so many rules in the Muslim religion.

S: Do you think there are more than there are in the school?

C1(B),C2 (3), and 4 (B): Yeh.

All the South Asian children interviewed were clear about what they felt were the priorities for their teacher. In response to the question about what their teacher might want, or be pleased with they listed a range of things: "Doing the correct thing. When you're doing good work and trying hard and not talking that much ...work, behaviour and things...your knowledge. ..our understanding." And in response to what they felt their teacher helps them with they said: "Understand how to like – how to learn more stuff... like your history and your English - like if you need to write a letter; then you need good words. And good punctuation...Good spelling... Presentation....And you need to find out more...And then you've got to take your SATS tests and you've got to prepare that, for that for two terms."

Interestingly they understood that what teacher was interested in was their ability to learn things by heart as they did in the Mosque:

C7(P): She wants to know if we can learn things by heart. That's why in the afternoon some people read poems.

C8(P): Reading suras is like that but it because..

S: So it's the same as reading the suras?

C7(P): Yes it's just like that but different.

Although the Muslim pupils stated that their education in the Mosque was more important to them, they also expressed an appreciation of their teacher and appeared to be clear about what she wanted and respected. A few pupils felt that there was a link between their mother and teacher because they were both involved in teaching them:

C2(B): No actually she's [the teacher] like my mum cos...she teaches you stuff yeh.

C1(B): She [mother] teaches you stories, my mum told me stories about being a Muslim; about Islam and all that.

These pupils were also very aware of the different expectations within the school and Mosque and given the opportunity were eager to try and find links between the two although it seemed that everything was translated in relation to their religious beliefs and practices rather than the other way round. C1 (B) understood that the link between the Mosque and school was that you prayed that you would be good at both, therefore prayer created a sense of importance for both institutions:

C1(B): Actually they're the same; school work and thingy [SATS] because you have to pray and pray to be good at school.

They understood that the primary difference between themselves and their teacher was to do with religion and they seemed to respect this difference.

S: Any difference between the teacher (turning to the others) and parents?

C4 (B): She's got a different meaning to us.

C1(B): Miss, Miss doesn't believe in anything, like she doesn't go to the temple now.

Although pupils expressed great loyalty to the educational system in their lands of origin they also had respect for the gentler approach of their teacher at school. One pupil suggested that in this country teachers are kinder than teachers in South Asia:

C5 (B): You know this country teacher they're not that cruel or anything like that; they're kind of kinder.

It was noticeable that the pupils felt a sense of responsibility and respect for both their teacher and parents though a deeper loyalty and affinity to their cultural/ religious roots and identification with their communities rather than with the school. The Mosque relates to the way they will live their lives and also the meaning of their life. They were also clearly enthusiastic and most confident when describing things that related to their own knowledge and experience. Nonetheless their eagerness to discuss their cultural values and beliefs within the interview sessions, within the school, indicated a strong desire to integrate both systems i.e. to incorporate more of their cultural meanings and particular identity within the school system.

5.6.4. Identity and racism

An alternative radical response to the concerns that certain interviewees expressed was to develop a stronger response to the prejudice that could be experienced in the wider society. Here only adult interviewees have been included. P2 recognised that a lack of acceptance by the wider society has made South Asian young people more determined to wear their traditional costumes and behave as they want anyway. He believes that:

P2: The younger generation have actually started to realise that – regardless of – you know we can be as English as we can but we won't be accepted regardless so why not follow your own religion.... and you'll have an identity at the same time saying this is what we are.

This type of response also relates to the development of Ashrafication mentioned in the literature discussed in Chapter two. P2 had also found his own response to dealing with the cultural clashes that South Asian parents experienced.

P2: We do get lecturers regularly at the religious centres that you have to understand our children today because there's a culture clash. I think you need more understanding and you can't just scream and shout and say you have to do this; you have to do that. You only understand anything is when you are told quietly; calmly ...because we are in a modern society we're not in an Islamic state or anything. This is an English country.

Another type of solution could be identified as a critical understanding of the experiences among the various members of the communities. This critical understanding brought elements of the various South Asian communities together and influenced them to be more confident of their divergence from western values in general. S1 was suspicious of the seemingly boundless sense of freedom that she felt the West promotes:

S1: Freedom is so – I think that probably why so many Indians come across here [is] because they think it's going to be so free. But it's not until they realise that it's not so free....freedom was [when she was a teenager], it was something luring you that way...temptation isn't it?

The ways of resolving difference so far presented so far in this mode of response demonstrate an ability to circulate in other cultural groups and to empathise with others' experiences plus an ability to clarify what aspects of South Asian cultural practices and ideals to identify with. Although participants registered recognition of the West's sense of freedom and equality, it was still more ideal to translate western ideas into a South Asian version rather than adopt western ideals unquestioningly.

Although the interviewees managed to find ways of resolving some problems they did not use dynamic ways of resolving the racism they experienced but rather a conscious way of avoidance. S2 commented:

S2: We do come across a lot more racism [compared to another area in the UK she had lived in].

However, she also understood that the location of an inner city area in itself created problems rather than living in the UK as such:

S2: Maybe ...living in this area...kids on the street and obviously there's drugs and everything around. I want my kids not to be anywhere near that type of environment.

S2 said that she had thought about these problems on numerous occasions. S2 was able to disentangle the roots of certain racist experiences and not just react defensively. P2 expressed a sense of pain and disorientation at the end of racism he had decided that: "It's just the way it is – you learn to accept it." Although this comment implies some resolution, it does not represent a totally dynamic response but rather a kind of acceptance. Here although the response is similar to that identified in mode one (avoidance), there was a more conscious recognition of avoidance as a strategy and thus this can be seen as a more positive way of resolving difficulties.

5.6.5. An in-depth study of the radical Sikh: key features of the dynamic mode

It is useful to examine the different way that S3 negotiates and synthesizes the contrasting influences in her life. Covering the same themes as in the previous section she is able to elaborate upon and develop her own idea more fully than the other participants offering a wide range of ways of resolving dislocations. However, it is important to register that her independence is not necessarily what other participants would wish for.

S3 acknowledges the importance of an Asian identity for both herself and her children. She has transgressed the immediate limitations of her community and family by marrying a Hindu and at the same time gathered a more sophisticated understanding of the potential for positive change in the future. She also realises that when she was a child school provided a sanctuary for her because it was a place where she could have other values and express other behaviour. She understands the painful conflict between the traditional values of certain families and the needs of their children.

5.6.5.1. Similarities with Westerners

S3 did not identify any particular ways in which she affiliated with western views but in general she maintained a balanced view of a variety of perspectives and was ready to criticise any perspectives. She is very concerned about any sort of fundamentalism or sexism:

S3: I don't like the people that I've noticed that are Born Again Christians that say Jesus is alive and then the next day say it's the ten commandments and Allah, So I find it all a bit oppressive whether it's English or whether it's fundamentalist Muslims. So I think the challenge for the community is not to get lost up its own bum in terms of being reactionary.

She sees faults in both western and south Asian communities and feels it is fair to be critical of the limitations of South Asian communities, but not to see them as some sort of alien group. She therefore criticises outsiders' perceptions of the communities

as "exotic/alien/pariahs" without understanding them. In her mind it would be more relevant to recognise that all communities have certain problems:

S3: I don't think people in Britain should get lost and think ooh that's the culture we'd better leave that alone, [with reference to instances of abuse] that's how people think and that's how they [the communities] live...[they should understand that]...It's because they're not educated themselves... It's wrong to look at them [South Asians] as if they're these people that have this incurable disease...A lot of white people don't get involved with their children's education.

S3 thus demonstrates an awareness of the complexity and multiplicity of identities.

5.6.5.2. Religion

Insights into her religion were also critically analytical and objective:

S3: Sikhism means something to me because I grew up with this idea that everyone is equal but I believe that there is one religion...There's no difference in the religions of the world.

She described Sikhism as a secular religion because she feels it is possible to agree with the sacred tenets of Sikhism without having to adopt the religious rituals. Although she was introduced to the rituals as a child she has opted to ignore many of them as an adult:

S3: It's a secular religion. What I like about Sikhism is that as a child I grew up in a Sikh family...and we were new in the fifties so we all set up [built] the temple where we used to go all the time and everyone got married there... So it was a part of my life when I grew up.... So I grew up really in the temple. I was told all these things but I didn't really understand, but as I grew up I learnt a bit more about life. And I have a funny relationship with Sikhism because I have the relationship with it as a child and I have another relationship with it as an adult. I do find what it says and what it does as two different things.

S3 was also drawn to the ancient Pagan elements in the Hindu religion and ideas around the Goddess Kali. She recognised the strength and weakness in both western and eastern beliefs but had a preference for the depths of eastern beliefs and found western cultures shallow by comparison.

5.6.5.3. Education

The insights S3 gained from her childhood experiences of living in a similar group of communities meant she was able to articulate how the communities in general approached education and her own contrasting approach. She was able to contribute insights into how they saw education in the UK:

S3: Oh yes they live as people do over in India; they live in extended families where the elders have more power; the older brother has or the older sister has. Everybody has a distribution of power that is based on a pyramid...My opinion of Asians is that they see school as there to give an academic education; they come from countries where education isn't free and they see

education as a tool and they're just really glad that their children are over here and getting a good education. And they're told that British education is the best and they think it's a golden opportunity. And I think that most of the parents feel that the school is way above them. It's a bit like the Sahib in colonial times...Oh in their minds they still three quarters urbanising [adapting from their more parochial and rural backgrounds] and so as *far as they're concerned they've got nothing to offer the school. And that the school doesn't want to know what they've got to say anyway.* They just feel that their children are getting the best education in the world. Even if it's just an inner city, run of the mill school. I don't think the parents see it like I do. I see it as just an inner city school so it won't be that great so I have a lot more criticisms; *so I tend to get more involved as a critical person* (emphasis added).

For S3 it is the South Asian communities' cultural ignorance and a lack of respect for the customs and beliefs of a secular society that inhibit communication and understanding between the school/wider society and community. She offers a critical eye:

S3: No it's not language ---it's this notion of colonisation because most middle-class Asians speak English as a second language. So if they were in schools they could speak English to the teachers. So it's not about language because there's Punjabi speaking teachers in the school. I mean it's about interest – they're not interested. They see the secular world as a material world and they're just there to get as much as they can out of it. So they're really glad that the kids are going to school. And it's secular – if it was religious – if it

started to interfere with the religious side of it – then they'd all be there and language wouldn't stop them.

In this instance S3 clearly distanced herself from South Asian communities. However, it is important to register that S3 opted to remove herself from the communities' centres and did not want to take on the responsibility of a community spokesperson. In this sense she did not have to find a compromise between the different views expressed by those who circulated in the centres as P1 did.

5.6.5.4. Identity and racism

S3 was able to be critically analytical and objective about her own upbringing and influences in her life. She recognised how she had changed her views over time in response to the more sophisticated and complex understanding that her education and geographical mobility had allowed her to develop. She would not want her own children to be brought up as she was. This is how she describes it:

S3: I found my upbringing really oppressive. I have the impression that they [this present community] are like the community I grew up in. I know that's quite a limited view because I don't know them but I suppose the contact I do have, means that I recognise the community and I was quite shocked when I saw this. Here they're just living with the old village traditions especially about women...my feeling is that it's going to have to change. I think it's probably the women that are changing inside themselves and that it's the girls who are making those changes; it's just important that they don't hide it.

She is also aware of the limitations of the local community and can explain the way in which they are still trapped in the past with a sense of inferiority and some ignorance. Nonetheless S3, like all the other parents in this study, felt it was vital for children to visit the Subcontinent to keep both these identities alive:

S3: I'd like them to see their relatives and the Punjab and I'd probably take them to a Gurdwara and one or two temples...[and visit Orissa] I mean you go back to the temple and you're always in the temple – because it's part of the life there...I know people who went in their, childhood it really, it really transformed them....And people who never went did feel the gap....I'd love to go back and see the house and place.

She would rather her daughters had greater choice and a range of options and understandings open to them. Whether they become Sikh or not is not a critical issue for her:

S3: [re success] My priorities well ...are that they should learn social skills and that they should learn to start living with each other in like a civilised way and that they should have an academic education and also that their creativity should be nurtured and their spirituality and not in an orthodox way...I don't know. I mean as far as religion is concerned, we never say there isn't a God but then we don't say God is anything in particular, so we do let her be...I don't know if our children will be Sikh, I think they'll make up their own mind.

Here S3 expressed an ability to be liberal and accept the equal validity of different perspectives. She has noticed that her daughter has opted to adopt some Punjabi customs anyway:

S3: Because she goes ... school she wants to wear Shalwar and I've always cut her hair and now she wants to grow it long.

S3 is inspired by the idea that identity can be about colour and not just about religion:

S3: That's a new form of identity....to say that your identity relates to your skin colour. And I find that exciting because I met a native American ...there was just so much excitement about meeting, just based on the brown skin.

S3 was excited and challenged rather than threatened by her awareness that there are different and other dynamic ways of dealing with difference and cross-cultural conflict. She was open to explore possibilities. However she did offer her children an insight into their Sikh culture and language. She had taken them to the Gurdwaras and gives them creative lessons in Punjabi and would like her daughter to learn Hindi as well:

S3: She has a story book and I teach her... and sometimes we read stories or make them up and give them an idea of the vocabulary as well....I've been trying to get my husband to teach her some Hindi.

Her knowledge of going to the Punjab and India also made her aware that the way the community she lived in was similar to the communities she'd encountered on the Subcontinent.

In relation to racism S3 recognised the limitations of her identity and was realistic. Her knowledge of racism, and her pride in her Asian origins made living in this inner city environment acceptable even if it was not ideal:

S3: I'd rather not live here – I'd rather go and live in the country like in Dorset or Cornwall. That's what I want to do but I can't just go and live anywhere when there's racial prejudice and I've got two Asian girls to bring up. That's why I live here. That's why I'll always live in the inner city in a multicultural area. .... I don't really have any expectations. I wouldn't want them to see any racism and that they are not being taught well but I see there are so many non white children in the school. That may not be an issue. I want my children to have an all-round education and no prejudice. I'd also like them to learn and they do - about different cultures and religions. And she [her daughter] knows about all that because she learnt about that earlier in the year. They were taught about the Caribbean and about Islam.

5.6.5.5. Synthesis

S3 more than the other interviewees demonstrating this mode of response was able to integrate and synthesise conflicting tensions. She was able to recognise that things are changing in India and within her own South Asian culture more recently and yet she retained a critical eye about both her own and western culture:

S3: And I think the culture is evolving anyway. I mean I think the other part of westernization is that the colonisation is finished. I think it's becoming glaringly obvious to people who come from world- wide origin that even if their culture has been disparaged that it's not true. And I, that all the cultures that colonialism touched – which is basically all the world – is that the younger generation are beginning to pick and choose and discriminate between what they want to keep and what they don't. And they realise that with music and the media they're not losing their culture, they're just transforming it and adapting it. And I feel the strength of my own family and my Indian culture because everyone's changed; I mean I've seen changes that I would have never dreamt would have happened...I imagined that people would marry English people and get divorced and eat roast beef and potatoes on Sunday but it's not happened.

S3 also identified particular ways in which women had been prejudiced in the communities and how this was now being addressed:

S3: Lots of feminist women I know who left home at seventeen or had to lie and who were called sluts and things like that; I mean now a lot of them want to go to the Gurdwara and pray and we're saying it's our temple – it's ours, and it, believes in equality as well and we are not going to tolerate you shitty patriarchs. You know I think there's going to be a real shift in who actually is going to take ownership of the culture...And people are doing it in India and people are sending the old crotchety mother-in-laws – who say stay at home

and do the cooking; they're sending them to psychiatrists. I mean there's a lot of rubbish in the culture...it's all got to be thrown away.

It is worthwhile noting here that part of S3's ability to be dynamic was also because she would be quite uncompromising and extreme, not prepared to prevaricate or allow herself to be confused for long.

However, ultimately S3 feels positively about the creative strengths of mixing western and eastern cultures as well as realising that there is still so much to discover or rediscover about eastern cultures:

S3: With the western culture - there's this confusion and fusion. I think it's just going to go on blending, ending and evolving. But the thing is the more you do that, the more people go back to their own culture... digging more out. There's this kind of treasure chest of knowledge, craft and art and religion and spirituality and it's pouring into eastern music nowadays...you've got sort of qawwali [Sufi poetry evoking a trance-like state through voice and tabla] and Hindu chants - so they're mixing all the religions and I think there's a lot of hope there. Because there was a time when they were strict with all the younger generations and saying I'm Muslim, I'm Sikh, I'm this and they're not doing that in the music and the culture. And there's all this older generation ... people who grew up in the sixties and seventies ...and they're all very progressive with the younger generation.

S3 feels clear about what she would want to preserve of her cultural inheritance as well as aspects of the west that remain unappealing and unhelpful and critically analytical of over-positive views of the west.

S3: You want to keep that love and that closeness and kindness for each other. Because I think there was a lot more understanding [interest in]... English families and people used to look up to [them]. But now we're finding that they don't look after their parents, and brothers and sisters don't love each other. And parents just because they have love marriages; it doesn't mean they love each other more than arranged marriages love each other. So we've got a new understanding of ourselves about our identity that we are going to survive.

5.6.6. Conclusion

Although S3 and P3 are not young themselves, they perhaps express the more dynamic views that young South Asians may feel and though their views may be less commonly voiced within this particular community, they are representative of some of the developments and diversity that exists in the communities.

In looking at the three modes in total one can perhaps trace some kind of continuum in assessing South Asian responses to society as a whole within which school plays some role. Mode one represents a response from the South Asian community with a high degree of independence or disengagement from the wider society's values and beliefs. By contrast, mode three is a response that entails engagement with both South Asian and UK values and beliefs. This third mode contains material that reflects the dynamic elements of change and continuous mastery of conflicts and problems. The

response in mode two represents a recognition of conflicting values and beliefs without firm resolution. FIG 5.1.given below illustrates responses to key themes.

Figure 5.1.

THEMES	Mode 1	Mode 2	Mode 3
Identity	Greater sense of security with more traditional South Asian identity. Relative sense of alienation from wider UK society.	In a state of transition and unresolved. Aware of the strengths of different values and beliefs but inhibited by circumstances from developing a more clearly defined identity.	Creative, independent and assertive sense of identity.
Relationship with schools	Belief in English educational system but relative distance from it and greater identification with Islamic or Sikh institutions of learning.	Relatively positive relationship with education in schools, Mosques and Gurdwaras but reservations about the ability of schools to address issues of identity, cultural knowledge and self-esteem for South Asian pupils.	Critical of constraints within the school but confident to voice another opinion and not inhibited by the school.
Relationship with communities	Sense of security gained from affiliation with the community, which provides a haven from negative stereotypes in the wider society.	Positive relationship with aspects of the communities in general and a sense of belonging to particular communities, though aware of their limitations.	Critical of the constraints within the communities, yet relatively loyal to a general South Asian identity and showing a preference for living nearby rather than in another locality despite hardships faced. Socialises outside communities with ease.
Agency/structure position	Agency achieved through avoidance of wider society yet inhibited by negative stereotypes once outside communities.	Most constrained mode due to parents' (and teachers) awareness of the tensions created by the ethnocentric focus of the National Curriculum as well as community rules and regulations.	Strong sense of agency though not always expressed overtly yet clearly felt and articulated when confronted.

An important aspect of the modes, which can perhaps explain why people may demonstrate several modes of response, is the situatedness of responses. People may respond in one way to one topic (or at one time). Thus attitude is not the only factor in a response. A response can also be related to situations and circumstances. For instance if issues relating to schooling arose in an interview participants who may have voiced affirmative and clear responses in relation to their cultural practices and beliefs (mode one) could become quite anxious and concerned (mode two) about how to resolve the tensions perceived in relation to school practices and experiences.

The data indicates clearly the diversity of responses between ethnic groups and between individuals. It is possible to see some overall affirmation to the modes in the different in the different cultural communities interviewed. In particular there is a predominance of Bangladeshis in mode one and a predominance of Sikhs and radicals in mode three. However, more important than this general trend in affiliation is the fact that accepting this perception of different kinds of responses there is clear evidence of many interviewees having a range of responses to the wider society (thus to different aspects of what school represents).

Recognition of the difference in response according to individuals, and for individuals according to the topic, could help those in school to avoid stereotyping South Asian communities' response i.e. to prevent all communities from being viewed as the same; and to recognise that attitudes/responses are variable within the individual.

As well as recognising a range of responses to society at large (as well as just to school) it was possible to identify a range of different response on a more conceptual

level and these are dealt with in some detail in the following chapter. In addition these conceptual differences and other findings from the research are analysed in relation to existing literature (described in chapters two and three) to assess the contributions made by this study.

CHAPTER SIX: RELATING CONCEPTS TO CATEGORIES

6.0. It was possible to identify the following areas of conceptual problematisation: *diversity* (within/across communities); *dynamic interaction* (in responses); the *divide* between home and school and *difference and disjuncture*, defining the mismatches between the South Asian communities and society at large (including school). The first three conceptual areas have been partially covered in the data analysis of the three modes and thus the sections on these are briefer in this chapter. Thus the main conceptual focus is on difference and disjuncture. These conceptual areas are also discussed in relation to the literature analysed in chapters two and three.

6.1. Diversity

Communication between individuals, institutions and communities such as that between society and the individual, and schools and parents requires some understanding of other people's beliefs, values and actions and of the range of different beliefs and attitudes and values, such as that identified in this research.

Bourdieu (1986, 1977, 1992, 1997), even though he does not refer to ethnic minorities, appears to be helpful here in identifying the "single" cultural capital promoted by school. However Bourdieu does not engage with the possibility of the variety of different kinds of cultural capital that might exist in different kinds of communities – they are rather amalgamated into the disempowered classes as one group.

Some literature does suggest that there might well be a range of responses within South Asian communities that differs in relation to both circum stances and perceptions. The responses in

the modes could be seen to relate to possibly three of the four categories for ethnic minorities responding to typologies offered in a census form developed by Hutnik (1991), mentioned in chapter four. Hutnik's dissociative typology could be applied to all the interviewees as they all identify themselves as South Asian. However, mode three potentially related to two others of Hutnik's typologies, in fact the most representative of this mode, the radical Sikh could possibly be described as acculturist or even marginal because she affiliated with being "black" and not just South Asian and seemed to voice a greater independence than any one else in terms of how she identified herself. Also the teachers could be seen as representing an acculturist response with the pupils combining both disassociative and acculturalist responses. However, the participants were not asked to consider their responses to these typologies and only S1 noted the limitations to the census forms in relation to her religious rather than cultural identification as a Sikh and Hutnik's categories do not consider this limitation. Also Castells (1997) creates three contrasting categories: legitimising, resistance and projected identities. His resistance identity, although similar to mode one has more negative overtones than this thesis's reaffirming response, in other words a reaffirming response is seen as an acceptable response within the cultural vocabulary of the communities. Hall (1990) discusses the effects of colonization on the colonized at a psychological level and how it affects self-esteem and identity, and Mohanty (1997) discusses the impact of eurocentric beliefs on non-western approaches to life. Both Hall and Mohanty among others (for example Said, 1993 and 1997) identify the way in which the western world has attempted to impose a homogenous view upon non-western cultures and identities and has not recognized their experiences or histories. These writers identify the importance of self-definition and self-perception for communities and cultures. These various dimensions captured in the literature (at the intra personal, and inter/intra group levels) indicate that South Asian communities are likely to manifest a range of responses to the wider UK society.

Furthermore, ethnographic studies e.g. in Ballard's compilation identified diversity of beliefs and practices, which in themselves would influence people to have different responses. All these possibilities had to be considered in relation to what may be discovered in the field.

Studies of South Asian parents previously done (for example Bhatti, 1999, Ballard 1994 and Dhasmana 1994) do not differentiate between the degrees of responsiveness that these parents have towards the West and tended to project a sense of unanimity. The range of categories offered by literature e.g. working class, South Asian, ethnic minorities and Sikhs could not in themselves encapsulate the diversity that the researcher encountered in the field.

The range and diversity of responses within the South Asian communities both need to be identified to dismantle the edifice of unanimity implied by exploring its dimensions: its cultures, its histories and its perspectives. The fieldwork in this research revealed such diversity both within and between communities.

In the data that emerged from this research there appeared to be diversity of two different sorts: firstly within each ethnic/religious group (Bangladeshi, Sikh and Pakistani) and secondly, in response to particular issues i.e. by adopting three different modes of response. The important aspect here was that this diversity cut across ethnic groups (even though there was some group dominance per mode) and individuals themselves revealed diverse views according to different contexts and issues. Diversity was even apparent in the interviews with the teachers. Although the teachers were of South Asian origin they expressed quite different attitudes to the communities and also had different focuses or concerns in relation to cross-cultural issues in the school.

In this research the analysis of the data moves away from officially acknowledged categories of identity such as ethnic or religious groups to *categories of response*. This moving away may appear to ignore one set of differences by imposing a different set of differences but it was one way of dismantling the categories relating to religion and culture and finding new categories which mirrored the diversity found in the data. These categories arose out of the data (Oakeley: 1994) and had not been anticipated prior to the collection process.

Recognition of this diversity is also a means of overcoming the limitations imposed by stereotyping. However, the recognition of diversity and identification of different kinds of identities does not in itself encompass all of what may be happening and affecting people in a cross-cultural situation. It was necessary to identify also the nature of responses in terms of their own fluidity and dynamic.

6. 2. Dynamic interaction

Responses by their very nature are dynamic and based upon interaction and contexts. Therefore to reify one kind of response inhibits insight into the socio-political, interpersonal and intrapersonal levels of interaction. In some of the literature in this area relating to South Asian communities (e.g. Ballard, 1994; Bhatti, 1999; Gardner and Shukar, 1994; Ghuman, 1999; Luthra, 1997; Modood, 1994, 1997) there is still a relatively static portrayal of the communities. The transience of beliefs and practices of communities within a cross-cultural situation is still missing. Trevarthen (1995) and Rogoff (1990) do mention the cooperative, interactive and negotiated world of home life with its flexible and informal dimensions and contrast this with the dry rational formalised world of the classroom, but there is no cross-cultural interaction dimension nor any specific reference to difficulties encountered by ethnic groups.

Two exceptions here are Rassool (1999) and Basit (1997), although even here there are lacunae. Rassool (1999) does focus on the reflective discourse elements among her participants and Basit (1997) does register the debate and possible process of equilibration (see Inhelder and Piaget, 1958, for explanation of this concept) that her participants may be involved in as they evaluate contrasting cultural perspectives. These two studies do therefore convey some of the transitory and mutable aspects of living in a cross-cultural setting, but their insights focus only upon responses from adolescents and not the wider South Asian communities. Also, the contexts are not the participants' but rather their schools. We do not get an idea about the different perspectives circulating around them.

Furthermore, there are limitations and possible distortions if one cultural group or aspect is treated in an isolated way and not linked to a larger picture of the communities and society at large. For example Ballard's (1994) study of Sikhs in Bradford; Gregory's study of contrasting pedagogies in the Mosque and school (1994); or Gillborn's focus on the paradigms of Black and White represented by an antiracist analysis (1997) all represent in-depth studies of aspects of South Asian life. These studies are rich in important data and considerations but their particular focus tends to segment and separate the area that is being studied from other elements that embody its wider context. Modood (1997) and Luthra (1997) too offer comprehensive details about the different values and beliefs of South Asian communities and include important ethnographic data, but despite their evaluative and searching appraisals they seem somehow separated from the microcosm of dynamics in communities and the macrocosm of the effects of globalisation. In a sense they appeared to hang in between and paradoxically reinforce a sense of difference and separation. Some studies of South Asian communities refer to the historical background or origins of

immigrants (Ghuman, 1999; Ballard, 1994) but they do not incorporate and analyze the way in which these connections can offer sophisticated links with contemporary South Asian cultures. Other studies tended to emphasize the rural and parochial elements (Bhatti, 1999; Shaw, 1994), rather than the link with other sophisticated academic and social elements that exist in these countries and which have the potential to influence families returning for visits. Although both Bhatti's and Ballard's studies indicate that their communities existed separately from other communities, living in the context of a wider UK society there will still be outside influences that affect individual families and groups within these communities. The research for this thesis on the other hand embraces this wider context by looking at the responses of communities to their wider social context rather than just to the school.

Another way of looking at responses is to consider a personal range of views. In a socio-linguistic context Billig (1987) identifies how different circumstances produce different identification and behaviours such as assertion and being more passive. However his analysis focuses on the use of language, or rhetoric and is less concerned with values. He also refers to writers in general rather than the specific context of South Asian communities in contact with the wider society. In this thesis a range of personal responses is captured by the mode categories, which can shift according to circumstance i.e. some people cross modes in their responses and are not always responding in only one way. Their responses are dynamic according to the situation they are in and their responses also integrate them into a wider field than just their community groups or even the positions they take in the communities.

Using modes, rather than just exploring a cluster of attitudes exhibited by one individual compared to another individual meant that attitudes could be detached from tight personal affiliation. This had two advantages: the ability to voice several modes of response according

to topic was captured; and it was possible to capture the range of modes within the community since interviewees often voiced the notion that their ideas were shared rather than individual.

As well as considering the dynamic and diverse elements of personal response in any South Asian community it is also useful to consider the nature of the specific situation of the divide between home and school.

6.3. The divide between home and school or community

The literature described and analysed in chapter three, on the home/school situation raised awareness of the problems that were likely to exist for all communities even those who held middle-class values, beliefs and practices, for example, Crozier (2000), Dunn (1993) and Hughes, Wikeley and Nash (1994). In particular this literature raised the problem of tensions between the school and home perspective, the different learning practices, beliefs and generally drew attention to the different priorities between the two. However, the "balanced" approach taken in literature on the home/school divide where both school and community priorities are examined did not allow for a full exploration of the non-school perspective. Agendas and concerns focused upon how to address the schools' problems: limitations to the curriculum and pedagogy, difficulties of access, academic attainment, but little that does not directly relate to school concerns such as community cultural practices and beliefs. Gregory (1994) does provide a rich source of insight into the different technical and linguistic dimensions of learning within both the Mosque and the school. However, she does not explore the fundamental sense of belonging and identification that exists for Muslim children, where in Bourdieu's terms there is important cultural capital and which therefore carries more meaning for them in terms of their whole life than the school can. In this research a

wide range of dimensions was not just confined to responses to school but rather to the whole community of which school is a part. This then represents the wider view of "school" held by the South Asian communities (as described in the introduction) and seems a fairer way of locating the responses of the South Asian interviewees.

6.4. Difference and Disjuncture

Finally it became clear that the modes of responses themselves marked a conceptual difference in understanding discontinuities between home and school or home and the wider society. On the one hand discontinuity can be perceived just as difference. On the other it may be seen as the much more problematic notion of disjuncture. None of the literature reviewed for this research engaged with this conceptual problem of how discontinuity was perceived.

6.4.1.The concept of difference

The concept of difference suggests diversity which can be non-problematic:" The cultural politics of difference recognises both the interdependent and relational nature of identities, their elements of incommensurability and their political right of autonomy" (Rutherford: 1990: 10). Three different differences were identified: i) differences and similarities between the different cultural groups; ii) different responses within each community and; iii) differences among the different generations.

i) Between the various community groups (Pakistani, Sikh and Bangladeshi) differences have the potential to create conflicts. These differences originate in different histories, for example because of the partition and also entail different "sources" of cultural knowledge and different religious beliefs and practices. The differences between Muslim and Sikh religious

beliefs can also develop into different degrees of commitment to community life and also connection or contrast with western values. These differences have been noted by Ballard (1994), Shaw (1994), Lewis (1994), Parker-Jenkins (1995) and Gregory (1994) among others.

ii)Different responses exist within the communities because within a particular "community" and even within individual families there are different degrees of conformity and difference in response to general values and beliefs. In this research the three different positions of a) spokesperson, b) member, c) radical and the three different kinds of responses in the modes were identified. As mentioned earlier some difference (diversity) within groups has been identified in the literature.

iii) Different positions within family structures can influence different experiences of western culture and different linguistic knowledge. This is most conspicuous between Elders and younger members of the communities. These in turn imply different responses to the UK due to experience and knowledge. These intergenerational differences have been identified by Luthra (1997), Gardner and Shukar (1994), Basit (1997) and Lewis (1994) among others.

However although various researchers have identified "differences", the conceptual differences between difference and disjuncture has not been investigated in any depth. People can live in parallel with different views but these differences may not impinge upon people's capacity to develop. In relation to the concept of identity, "difference" represents a plurality of identities that may exist either in a community or within an individual. This plurality does not necessarily entail tension.

Mode one, the reaffirming mode, appeared to encapsulate this response to plurality where difference is accepted apparently without tensions being acknowledged or perceived. The evidence provided in the data analysis reveals how an affirming response embeds its cultural meanings and even sense of self within a non-western culture and how the west is viewed from this vantage point.

In order to protect their South Asian cultural identity and beliefs certain interviewees described how they avoided situations where their beliefs and practices were challenged: they chose to develop and maintain social centres where their values and beliefs were respected and also practised, so that they could avoid mixing in the wider UK society. Avoidance can thus be seen as a response related to a concept of difference where plurality may be unproblematic. The response in mode one to potential disjunctures was to withdraw or reaffirm an alternative set of practices and beliefs, which offered a sense of ownership because it is inherited and not imposed. Even though for others avoidance may be interpreted as negative, it can be seen as reaffirming and positive because disjuncture is not recognized as a concept. This is one way of resolving discontinuities.

6.4.2. Disjuncture

Disjuncture implies tension, unease, discomfort and conflict, the subordination and unequal position of a person or a community. This disjuncture exists for many communities e.g. New Age Travellers, African Caribbean communities and not just South Asian communities, although Ballard (1994) writing about differentiation and disjunction among the Sikhs uses the word disjunction to identify conflict and dynamic within a situation where people are equal. He describes the rivalry and

competitiveness within Sikh communities. Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital and symbolic violence indicate disjuncture between school values and non-school values for some groups. Reay (1998), Crozier (2000) and Vincent (2001) highlight the implicit inequality (and potential disjuncture) in the educational system. In particular Blackledge (2000) and Vincent (2001) identify the way in which South Asian voices are silenced and omitted from the school agenda. Issues of immigration, imperialism, colonialism (see Said, 1993; 1997; Chatterjee, 1997) and globalisation (Castells,1997) also produce a subordinate position for the South Asian communities. Dhasmana (1994) identifies disjuncture in schools with misunderstandings that teachers have about the involvement and perspectives of South Asian parents and Alldred, David and Edwards (2001) highlight the lack of attention to the clash between different generations' perspectives, in particular the need to recognize the pupils' perspective within the home/school agenda. Disjuncture can mean exclusion. Disjuncture then is obliquely covered by many writers but without necessarily pointing to the distinction with difference.

It can be seen that there is an important distinction between disjunction and difference relating not only to external views of the South Asian community but also to their views of themselves and in turn their responses to the wider society.

Disjuncture occurs at a point of potential juncture where there is a need to interact and integrate but where integration is impeded. "Disjuncture" then comprises incompatibilities, incoherence, and conflict. A lack of exchange indicates not only a conflict of identification but also "disjuncture" of purpose and ideology. Recognising disjuncture also means recognising structural constraints that inhibit individual agency. This may be at a perceptual level and not just a structural level.

Vincent (1996) suggests that differences are important because they evoke different

expectations that are not reconcilable unless they are recognised. For instance, although educational literature talks of "the" community outside the school, there is no "community" of a homogenous type outside the school; there are a variety of communities that select to behave and believe by definition "differently" and who do not seem themselves as a homogenous community. This then is a disjuncture due to a misconception of what exists and most importantly of how others see themselves. In this instance Vincent's use of the word difference in fact indicates the existence of disjuncture.

Disjuncture may occur at an intrapersonal level where one identity threatens to crush or undermine another. Thus if a woman is both a mother and a teacher she may feel uneasy or troubled about neglecting the "mother" identity and expectations surrounding this identity because her teacher role and identity takes up more of her time and energy. A Muslim may feel happy to circulate with people of other faiths and cultures within a community (i.e. just operating with "difference") until she is required to subjugate her faith to other practices (when "disjuncture" may occur). This could be when the Azan (call to prayer) is not permitted or recognized as important within daily routines at work or school. Challenges such as these may occur at perceptual and not just circumstantial level. Recognising disjuncture also brings the problem of resolving the discontinuities, so that a Muslim in this situation may have to withhold or repress her beliefs consciously or subconsciously to engage in the situation in a conciliatory manner.

There were three different levels at which disjuncture was recognised to occur: i) between the wider society and the communities, ii) between teachers and parents and iii) between teachers

and the National Curriculum and each level of disjuncture exists for a variety of reasons as explained below.

Between the wider society and the communities there are the fundamental differences that exist between majority and minority cultural / economic and political positions and expectations. This then becomes recognisable when participants talk of feeling isolated, excluded, embarrassed, and recall experiences of racism and feeling "different" from the membership and lifestyles of the wider society.

There are perceptual differences between the teachers and the parents (often the ways in which they internalise/interpret a situation) and there are also different "role" expectations, purposes and involvement with the children. The school and the communities both have different "rules" and create different constraints, aims and beliefs for the teachers, pupils and community members.

Disjuncture between the teachers and the National Curriculum can occur because what the teacher perceives as meaningful (in relation to the needs of her pupils) and what the National Curriculum asserts is necessary can differ considerably. At the level of implementation, teachers still have to defer to the requirements of the National Curriculum tests and Ofsted. This aspect became less important in the research as the focus switched from a school agenda (of success) to a community focus.

The responses in both modes two and three were seen as recognising disjuncture and coping with it in different ways. In mode two (contradictory responses) responses are reflected by the voices of parents and pupils who are aware that there are problems and difficulties

between the school, community and in the wider society but are disadvantaged and seriously challenged when they try to address them. Consequently they can express consternation and anxieties in relation to this challenge. For example a major problem that the teachers expressed was the lack of South Asian parents attending PTA meetings. In response to this issue the interviewees raise the problems of language, confidence and knowledge all of which they know disadvantage their communities' parents. Most importantly this mode evokes a state of transition between recognising problems but not fully understanding them. Also, in this mode resolutions are not clearly achieved. The researcher became aware of the anxiety and consternation that these situations presented for the participants because of the language used ("worry", "fear"). This mode encapsulates the structural and perceptual barriers that arose for the South Asian participants.

However, the disjunctures experienced are resolved at a perceptual level to some degree in mode three (dynamic responses). Some writers have recognised the equivalent of dynamic responses in resolving discontinuities for example Castell's (1997) projected identity, Gardner's identification of dynamic among young Bangladeshis, Ballard's (1994) description of Sikh communities, Rassool's (1999) flexible identities and Basit's (1997) dynamism. However the conceptual development of moving beyond the recognition of difference to the recognition of disjuncture is not acknowledged by these writers.

Also in considering the dynamic aspects of response it is interesting to use the framework of the four stages of culture shock that is identified in Brown (2000: 183-4 in the context of linguistic/cultural adjustment in contact with another language/culture) as an analytical tool. Contrasting this framework with the three modes further clarifies some of the conceptual areas developed in this thesis.

These four stages are: first a stage of excitement and euphoria in relation to the new environment; second, culture shock and an awareness of the difference as threatening, making people retreat into their previous cultural experience; third, vacillating between the new and old culture and gradually becoming more accepting of the new culture; finally either assimilation or acceptance of the new culture and self confidence in the new sense of understanding and person who has developed. Excluding the initial stage of enthusiasm the second stage in which individuals are understood to withdraw into their own cultures of origin could be aligned to the reaffirming stage. However, the stages that Brown records are seen to be progressively developing to a state of acculturation or even assimilation, or alternately fossilisation at one stage. This contrasts to the first mode as there is not such an expectation. The reaffirming state is understood to exist despite awareness of alternative lifestyles in the UK and a conscious decision to endorse South Asian rather than UK beliefs and practices, it is not seen as a fossilisation. However, Brown's third stage may be close to a tentative vacillating response that exists in mode two. Nonetheless, a central difference compared to Brown's category is that the origins for this prevarication is compounded by structural facts due to disjunctures e.g. the existence of racism and a sense of not being heard by the host culture. Similarly Brown's fourth stage, of recovery and self-confidence manifest in the development of a "new" person does not quite convey the dynamic response incorporating creative elements that young South Asians exhibit, who have been born in the UK yet identify more with their countries of origin and have not faced any cultural shock but rather a desire to synthesize their dual heritage. Brown's categories also do not include the cross-modal dynamic dimensions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

"I think it's just going to go on blending, ending and evolving."

(Quote by S3 in chapter five, mode three with reference to South Asian identity)

7.0. This chapter starts with a review of the research questions and evaluation of the thesis in relation to literature and data and considers the limitations of this thesis. It then considers how the findings of the research could be applied to assist communication between South Asian communities and school. Finally it makes suggestions for future research.

7.1. Review of the research questions

At this stage it is useful to evaluate the ethnographic approach by recalling the main research questions, which were distilled into four separate questions or elements and consider what answers this thesis provides. The first element of the question:

- What are the ways in which the meaning of education can be interpreted? Is there any unanimity of understanding about the meaning of education taking into consideration different cultural perspectives?

has already been addressed to some degree by the literature. At present there is limited literature on how alternative learning practices and belief systems compare with school practices although Gregory (1994) does offer useful insights. Criticism of the National Curriculum and the ethnocentric focus of educational policies and practices does usually focus on how cultural issues should be incorporated (Smart, 1997; Parker-Jenkins, 1995; Luthra, 1997, Vincent, 2001, Byram,1998 and Smith,

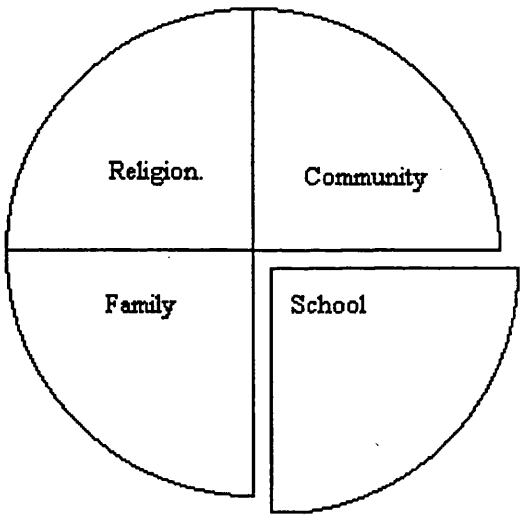
2000). Research has revealed that education in the Mosque and Gurdwaras or temples provides different sets of beliefs, practices and pedagogies (Gregory, 1994; Klein, 2000 and Ballard, 1994). However the fieldwork in this research revealed a range of different perspectives from parents, communities and pupils. The different meanings of education were expressed in the data from modes two and three. It is not surprising that responses relating to mode one did not engage with this area: the contact between school and home is one where juncture is expected and where plural diversity may be difficult to accept. In other words this contact demands engagement. The sources of these differences are understood to emanate from the different cultural beliefs and practices that originate either in the UK or Subcontinent. Those who had experienced a strict and colonial education on the Subcontinent, despite coming from different cultures, historical and geographical backgrounds wanted their children to focus upon the academic elements in the educational system. By contrast there were others, especially among the radicals and those representing a dynamic response that were critical of the National Curriculum, expressed concerned about the self-esteem, confidence of pupils and recognised the importance of self-expression through the arts. Perspectives offered in mode three and also from the teachers recognise the potential to address the differences and create a bicultural and less nationalistic/traditional approach to learning and education.

Thus this first question draws attention to the diversity identified in this thesis. These diverse beliefs and perceptions also suggest a different set of priorities, which leads us on to the second element of the research question:

- What are the priorities for South Asian communities and how does "school" fit into their agendas?

The fieldwork revealed that school featured as only a part of the four most important priorities within the South Asian communities' agendas as identified in mode one. It shared a position with religion, community responsibilities and family focus. However, the data analysis also identified the interconnectedness of the three other elements so that the school remained more isolated. It is therefore possible to adapt the South Asian social worker's diagram introduced in chapter one.

The social worker's diagram



This separation also indicates a division and relates to the problem of the home/school divide. Here for reasons relating to difference and disjuncture, the South Asian communities consciously focus on a range of other priorities in which the school is only a small part. Furthermore even in a small area schools vary in terms of their beliefs and practices as noted in chapter five where the two different teachers identified the different ways that parents were perceived within their particular

schools in relation to Nicholl's (1999) categories. However, despite these variations communication with South Asian parents in the locality was a concern for schools.

We can then consider why there is this separation by asking the third element to the research question:

- What are the difficulties and problems that underlie the lack of communication between the school and South Asian communities?

Given the importance of cultural and religious identity for these communities it was clear that all the participants would like to see a greater integration of their beliefs and practices in the school and curriculum and a few criticized the ethnocentric elements. These structural constraints are not insurmountable but unless they are addressed the situation that creates the disjuncture is likely to result in increasingly negative outcomes. If there is a disjuncture between the wider society and the South Asian community, this could erupt in conflict because, in this case the minority groups feel excluded and also feel that their voices are unheard and underrepresented. Similarly if there is a disjuncture between the National Curriculum and the teacher, then the teacher will feel ignored and threatened by an overriding pressure to conform to ideas she cannot identify with but has to somehow always uphold. This pressure can result in her resignation or an inability to work full-time. Finally if there is a disjuncture between the parents and the teachers then it is unlikely that there can be any negotiations, because in this instance the disjuncture is created by series of misunderstandings that are intensified by the other two disjunctures. However hard the teacher may attempt to include the communities' histories and beliefs she is

constrained by the edicts of the National Curriculum that she must answer to in terms of "results". However much the parents may want to contribute to their children's education in schools they are constrained by their understanding that the school represents the ideological stance of a secular, British culture that often ignores and disrespects their own. It is not possible to understand the way people may act and feel unless we know something about their histories and their experiences as well as our own.

This thesis argues that there are fundamental misunderstandings propelled by structural factors that inhibit any progress. It argues that it is relatively futile to invite South Asian parents to PTA meetings and parents' evenings and then complain that they do not attend, because there are fundamental disjunctures between the school and these parents that have to be resolved first. Similarly it is impossible to understand why South Asian parents take their children out of school to visit the Subcontinent and study Islam, if all that is considered is the inconvenience and not the meanings implicit in such serious decisions. The South Asian parents in this study wanted their children to do well at school but they also want them to experience a positive identification with their South Asian communities and have the knowledge of how to survive and circulate in these worlds where other languages and beliefs are required.

However we still need to ask how addressing the disjunctures and developing communication would benefit the educational establishment, which brings us to the final element of the research question:

- In what ways could the educational establishments and policy-makers benefit from a greater knowledge of the experience and expertise of parents?

This thesis focuses on the separated worlds of South Asian pupils and parents and the school. It understands that Asian cultures within the West can be seen as contributing an important reflexive element to UK culture and identities. In this way it supports Parekh's ideas: " Liberalism alone...is an inadequate as a basis for multiculturalism." (Parekh quoted in Jaggi 2000: 6). Far from seeing other cultures as having to be tolerant or assimilated Parekh believes these other cultures can provide crucial aids to understanding and evaluating one's own: " If the dominant western culture has no interlocutor it lives in a hall of mirrors (Parekh quoted in Jaggi 2000:6)." We need to exploit and acknowledge differences and as well as to overcome them to develop our insight.

7. 2. Recommendations

The findings of this research suggest that a higher level of awareness of the nature of South Asian communities could be helpful if incorporated into schools and encouraged in parents. This could take various forms. This thesis can be seen to contribute in further ways that may be helpful – by suggesting new ways of schools interacting with communities; by extending the range of studies of South Asian communities; by raising awareness of ways of thinking; and by illustrating the value of an ethnographic approach. To understand other cultures and beliefs it is crucial to empathise with a different point of view and also be prepared for the fact that different members of the communities may hold different views. Furthermore in

relation to the modes it is important to be prepared that parents' views may alter according to the context of the encounter and the topic under discussion.

The diversity that is revealed through the various categories can provide a further purpose namely in indicating that certain members have closer links to school and western ideology than others, and by implication that these are likely to be more accessible. Teachers could usefully identify parents in different categories to try and establish better links with the South Asian communities as a whole. A teacher or parent wishing to interact or circulate in the communities would benefit from approaching those members of the community that are either spokespeople, and therefore conversant with exchanges with outsiders, or alternatively radical or members expressing a dynamic response. Approaching a member of a community who has a reaffirming response to living in the UK is less likely to be productive, as this person probably will be less drawn into such an engagement. However, this does not mean that those with a reaffirming response are inaccessible; it just implies that there is a greater need for an outsider to want to understand the South Asian agenda rather than seeking to impose the school agenda (although clearly demands of the government through the National Curriculum and inspection make this difficult). Furthermore, as South Asian communities have very clear networks it is most helpful to an outsider to approach the spokespeople of the communities because these people also act as guardians or filters for the rest of the community.

Another finding from the research could also be helpful namely that, members of South Asian communities tend to see themselves and operate communally. It might therefore be helpful for schools to consider inviting parents to school in groups rather

than concentrating on the individual and on the individual attention so valorised in the West.

Other differences/disjunctures that the researcher identified between the South Asian communities' beliefs and practices and those in the wider UK society and school and differences and possible solutions to some of the issues are considered below.

For the Schools:

To increase communication with parents the following is suggested:

1) Expectations of sharing experiences and space were different. Many of the participants expressed a strong sense of collectivity. Therefore parents may well feel more able to come into the school as a group rather than alone.
2) Elders and other members of the extended family both in the UK and on the Subcontinent are seen as knowledgeable and respected, also being the guardians and owners of cultural and religious knowledge. These Elders and other knowledgeable members and especially community representatives could be invited in to discuss issues relating to culture and religion in schools.
3) There is a pressing need for more interpreters in the school and also for more translations of school and National Curriculum documents so that parents could understand the school's focus and knowledge base better.
4) The interviewees expressed concern about feeling "odd" and self-conscious at parents' evenings. This issue needs to be addressed by the schools. Furthermore the different expectations of parental involvement and the importance of parents' contributions has still to be realised by the school and communicated to the families,

as they do not feel valued and important. The need to empower these parents and relatives is crucial if schools wish to develop any communication with them.

Possible curriculum adaptations and inclusions

5) The recognition and respect for expectations of sacred spaces that South Asian parents voiced and the meaningfulness of cultural and religious beliefs all need to be integrated into the school, so that they are more respected and understood.
6) Understanding and connecting with the events and politics as well as histories of Pakistan, Bangladesh and also the Punjab is something that could be used to develop the curriculum. This is also something that could be achieved by encouraging the pupils and families to work on projects related to their beliefs and values for presentations at school.

Possible themes could include:

- Introducing areas of overlap in the curriculum and drawing upon cultural diversity to debate and consider e.g. poetry and suras etc
- Visits to the Subcontinent need to be acknowledged and used for the skills and knowledge they offer children.
- Pupils' creativity, intellectual endeavour and potential needs to be stimulated through valuing their experiences and drawing upon the pupils' experiences of contrasts.

In relation to institutional racism there are important issues to be recognised:

- It is vital for schools to recognise the disjunctures that exist for the communities both in their relationship with schools and the wider UK society.
- There is a need for more teacher training to raise a greater awareness of the implications of school practices that are racist, directly and indirectly e.g. it was important to register teacher X's point about the clique of White parents that prevented the South Asian parents from engaging more closely with the school.
- It is important to recognise the racism that children experience outside school as well as inside and understand how it impacts on self-esteem.

<u>For the communities:</u>

- Communities could integrate educational issues more into the general concerns and interests that then focus upon and develop more opportunities for discussion of educational matters
- They could challenge the schools to acknowledge the communities more. This could be achieved by inviting them to cultural events as the researcher herself was encouraged to join in with.

These are a few suggestions that were uncovered in the interviews. In particular if parents were invited in groups and had their beliefs, values and experiences validated then the school might find arenas of debate and common interest within the communities to work with. Correspondingly if parents could clarify whether there was any meeting ground between the Mosque and school (Gregory: 1994) or the school and the Gurdwara then the recognition of differences and similarities could be better

understood. (Ultimately though these options are for the future, this thesis can only conjecture upon the creative possibilities).

Issues that were uncovered in the literature that could be usefully applied.

- Greater co-operation and integration with Supplementary schools could be encountered as they are more closely linked to the communities. There is a need to find out more about these and start dialogues with them to create stronger links with the communities.
- Possible openings in the curriculum e.g. in history where the impact of colonisation on third world countries and the different of versions of history need to be included, or in geography where the South Asian pupils' "lived experiences" of other countries could be better integrated. Similarly the skills of these bilingual pupils could be better acknowledged in language classes, as well the contributions that ancient Islamic cultures made to science.

7.3. Limitations and Future research

This thesis also has some limitations some of which are based on its ethnographic foundations. Three particular areas are described below. First, this research is ultimately limited to the perspective of one individual who has various limitations, such as being monolingual, dependent upon intermediaries and at times dependent upon the interpretations of others. Second, it is only a small study of a very select group of people and is certainly not representative of the range of perspectives and views within South Asian communities throughout the UK, even less among the few "Black" or South Asian teachers that exist in the UK. It is useful to remember that the researcher assigned these categories to her cohort and another researcher might have

viewed these people differently or have chosen different representatives. Third, the fieldwork spans only two years within a particular time; it is not longitudinal and there may well be changes within the communities and schools before this thesis is finally complete.

Therefore in evaluating this approach it is worthwhile considering how things could be done differently another time. One consideration would be a longitudinal study that follows the developments of the communities and pupils' progress. Another would be to do a comparative study of two South Asian communities to identify the diversity and similarities between them. Another important difference would be to have a researcher fluent in South Asian languages in order to be able to communicate with a wider spectrum and also understand the conversations or "uddar" (with reference to B2's Bangladeshi term for chatting) that go on in the community centres.

It could be useful to adopt an approach where attitudes were identified within a group as was done with the use of the "modes", rather than allocating attitudes specifically to independent people. This may be particularly useful for researching South Asian groups where cultural beliefs and religious practices draw people into collective groups.

Attitudes in schools could be explored further to see how these 'balance' with the South Asian communities' views and to elicit opinions /reactions to the suggested ways of improving communications. The suggested ways of improving links could be trialled and monitored

Also, Brown's (2000) categories of cultural shock, analysed in the previous chapter, could also be useful in considering the range of responses that a person may move through and have introduced an important contrast to work with. This model could be applied to analyse data in future research and this framework could possibly used as a basis for an interview schedule.

An endnote

A key aspect of the research in this study was that of raising awareness. In the same way that the researcher needed to adapt and change her mindset during this research, the findings of this research may help to create a more general awareness of the need for more flexible thinking. There is still a need to develop pathways and opportunities that allow reflection and "exchange" to develop, drawing upon the resources of both the communities and school. The research process itself is a catalyst to change. In particular in this study the dialogic approach, asking questions and questioning our assumptions could be applied to a study of how teachers relate to communities: to help teachers to evaluate their relationship and possible prejudices about certain communities and encouraging a flexibility of approach and attitude. The previous chapters aim to create some useful foundations for further exploration and also to encourage others to creatively draw upon the importance of differences and contrasts to enhance their understanding and interactions. As Meyer (1991) suggests intercultural communication demands the skill to negotiate meanings as well as self-reflexive awareness. However, these skills can only be developed if the various parties are open to consider alternative perspectives as well as the different historical and social experiences that ensue from different positions and circumstances in life.

In relation to the researcher's own experience of interacting with the communities, she would like to pay tribute to the participants' generous responses to her questions and considerable insight they offered her. Although the selection of transcripts attempt to convey some of the rich and varied views and lives of the participants it can never ultimately describe the warmth, generosity and trust that the researcher was privileged to experience in moments of exchange. As Attinasi and Friedrich (1996) suggest the combination of neurological, psychological and cultural components of cross-cultural dialogues are not realisable in transcripts. Thus in relation to the limitations of script in terms of the ultimate aim of this thesis the author invites readers to venture out from their own domains of experience and discover this wealth for themselves, to question their own assumptions and draw upon their own "imaginations" to illuminate the data offered in the text by engaging with communities and teachers to discover their diverse and fascinating worlds.

Finally, as this thesis aims to encapsulate the importance of developing ourselves as well as our insights it also offers a perspective on the ethnographic method. The data would not have yielded such a rich source of knowledge if the researcher had ignored the most challenging suggestion that the participants and community members made: if she had not visited the Subcontinent. This degree of commitment to participation was a key to any real awareness that she was able to gain and would seem to be essential for those who aim to understand the most different aspects of experience that certain participants expressed. The visit made the researcher profoundly aware of the importance of "belonging" and of context that reaches across vast geographical boundaries into the hearts of those who continue to learn and share beliefs across continents within the spaces of their own homes.

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CONTRASTING PERSPECTIVES WITHIN SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITIES ON SCHOOL AND THE WIDER SOCIETY

Submitted by

SOFIA CHANDA-GOOL

APPENDIX

CONTENTS:

APPENDIX ONE: THE COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

RB1 (eventually B1)

The interview took place in a Bangladesh community centre.

RB1 has lived here (in the UK) since she was four years old. Her mother had two sons after she came to the UK. Her mother talked to her of their struggle settling in. They had to live in crowded accommodation sharing the kitchen and sitting room and having only one bedroom. She lived in a nearby locality but came to this particular inner city locality when she got married. She had an arranged marriage and went over to Bangladesh to find her husband. She used to wear western clothes until she got married, her husband prefers her to wear shalwar kameez. She also wore her hair down but now wears her orna (scarf) as her husband prefers.

If you have money then living in Bangladesh is much easier; you have servants and the weather is nice. Here you have to do all the ironing and housework yourself. However, here it is possible to go wherever you want on your own but over there you have to be chaperoned. Over there if you go to visit a close relative, such as your own parents, you still have someone there, such as your sister-in-law, who could be listening to every thing you say. Although she has been married for four and a half years she is still seen to be a young bride and this means that she has to be watched over.

She has a cousin in this country who doesn't speak a word of Bangla and can't read Arabic and doesn't like the thought of anything to do with Bangladesh, nor has he visited the country. She feels that if you visit the country you will love it. When I go she anticipates that I will feel sorry for the poor people and notice the dirt. She also understands that I wouldn't be blamed for not knowing about the culture or language. My ignorance would be blamed on my parents; they would be accused of not having brought me up properly. They would think that my parents just wanted to make money and ignored their responsibilities. However, things are changing, RB1's brother works for British Airways and her parents accept that he doesn't want to commit himself to any one. As a woman she wears the clothes her husband likes because she dresses for him and not for herself.

RB1's parents have always been understanding and taken her feelings into account. Although they would have liked her to wear her orna (head scarf) they didn't insist upon it. More importantly, although they went a long way into arranging a marriage for her without consulting with her directly e.g. having phone calls with relatives without letting her know, they accepted her decision against the marriage. Apparently her father argued about it a little but her mother argued for her case. Her mother said that there was no point in the marriage if it was not going to work in the long run and it was to be regretted later on. RB1 was then taken to Bangladesh to find a suitable partner because there wasn't anyone who was the right caste locally. Out in Bangladesh all these proposals came and she had to decide. In the end she considered looks and felt confident of knowing someone by the expressions on their face. She also didn't want someone who was much taller then her. She feels her parents were particularly considerate and that not all Bangladesh parents are. She is happy with her husband. He listens to her though he can have different opinions. She would allow her son to meet up with a prospective bride several times before he had to commit himself.

She said that some parents can still be very strict but that in the end you have to trust your child. She feels confident that if you do trust your child then s/he won't sneak off – she wouldn't and didn't.

RB1 believes that her religion and her culture are most important. The religion dictates what you can wear and how you do certain things, for example, you are expected to pray five times a day. She respects this although she doesn't always manage it. (I asked if the family was important too) – Yes it is very important and RB1 feels that if she had to choose between her family and her husband that she would get confused – they are both equally important to her. Later on RB1 mentioned that although the community is important, it is the family that takes priority. She meets up with her family every night. The family is a very strong tie.

From her point of view her religion is less strict then her culture. In her religion couples are allowed to go their separate ways if they can't get on. In her culture the man is always perfect, the wife is always blamed if anything goes wrong. No one sees her side of the story.

RB1 feels that all parents are willing to let their children go to school and college and many more do than did 10 years ago. Nowadays children are encouraged to get 'A' levels and degrees and go to work before marrying. She believes that the problem for Bangladesh parents is that they haven't been able to help their children with schoolwork because of a lack of knowledge of English and of what is required. School is fine but children also are expected to learn Arabic and the Koran. They often go there for an hour after school and at the weekends too.

RB2 (eventually B2)

The interview took place in B2's home

RB2's parents were both brought up in Bangladesh. Her father came over here 27 years ago. He was brought over by his brother-in-law who was already married to his sister and lived in England. Her mother arrived four years later. RB2 was brought up in Manchester and her family moved house several times. When RB2 was young there were only a few Mosques and she wasn't taught Arabic until she was fifteen. Suddenly at the age of fifteen she was expected to learn about Islam and read Arabic everyday. Her father also talked about the religion a lot. Before this time, she had led quite a western life, wearing western clothes. However, her parents were much more protective about her then western parents are. She said (jokingly) that she had to bully them to let her go on school trips. She met other Asian children at schools but the last school she went to had hardly any Asian pupils.

RB2 has an arranged marriage to her husband who was born and brought up in Bangladesh. He also completed his Master's degree out there and arrived over here in 1981. He is very concerned about maintaining an awareness and knowledge of Bangladesh both on a cultural and religious level. RB2 supports him.

RB2 said that Bangladeshis do like to group together. She and her husband ensure that the children learn about both their religion and culture. Over in Bangladesh there is also a great respect and involvement in cultural activities such as playing instruments, singing the songs and reading poetry. Some parents send their children to Bangladesh to learn about the culture and religion. Here she and her family join in the cultural /musical society. At these times they also meet with Sikhs who also enjoy coming together to make music. At the Mosque they meet up with Pakistanis as well as other Bangladeshis, however, the local Bangladeshi community centre is important because it keeps the language and culture going.

RB2 described Dhaka as full of businesses, a very overcrowded, polluted and noisy city with many poor. However, she said that the people are very friendly and generous; they insist that you eat their food. Education is taken very seriously and nowadays girls are pushed to go to Masters level. At university students get together to sing their songs and recite their poetry. They know Tagore's writings off by heart. RB2 said that lifestyles and life expectancy are harder for her to accept over there because she has always lived in the UK. However, she was surprised because when she looked at the photos after she returned she realised how basic living was out there and yet at the time she hadn't noticed. She had feared she wouldn't like it over there, but she loved it. She said that all the family treats you so well and that you feel very special.

The older generation tend to be more old fashioned and conservative. They would like their grandchildren to wear their orna (scarves) and speak Arabic. Her father tells folk stories to her children but she wasn't told any because she didn't have any grandparents around when she was young. The young mix more easily because they all meet up at school together. She said that even if the young aren't so interested in the family, which can cause problems, it is important that they feel some attachment to their culture. She felt it would also be helpful to have more opportunity to celebrate the festivals and culture.

Some middle-class parents demand a lot from their children. They expect them to do really well at school, learn Arabic and the Koran and also do their homework. Others who are tied up with the traditional businesses such as restaurants, may not encourage their children to learn at school because they have little use for school education in their work. These parents may also have little knowledge of English and therefore find interaction with school difficult.

RB2 would like to live in Manchester because most of her family live there, she would also like to live nearer the Mosque because then her father said that he would come and live near them.

RB3 (eventually B3)

The interview took place in an Asian community centre

RB3 lived in Bangladesh until the age of ten. She came over with her family. Her father came over here first and then she and her five sisters and mother joined him over here.

RB3 describes herself as an Asian women; she does not see herself as attached to either Bangladesh or the culture. She has two daughters and is divorced from her husband. Her marriage was very unhappy and she is glad that her parents believed her when she described how awful her husband was. They trusted her and didn't make a scene but they felt guilty about making the wrong decision for her. This tragedy in her life can create problems for her if she visits Bangladesh with her children. Her ex-husband's family would assume that the children would stay with them and that she would stay else where, she would not be happy about this. Although the Bangladesh community have not turned against her she feels slightly uncomfortable mixing with the community and prefers to mix in other groups. For her the Sikh community centre and the Pakistani community centre are such places, there she feels less conscious of the difference between her experience and that of other Bangladeshi women in the locality. She doesn't mix with western people though she expressed nothing against them. RB3 feels that some westerners may not like the way she dresses or how she ties her hair back; that some may be racists but that others are OK.

Education is a priority for RB3. She was educated in both Bangladesh and the UK but left home at fifteen. She would like to get some G.C.S.E.'s , do an Access course and qualify as a social worker. She also feels that education helps you to understand what you are doing with your life; it helps to make sense of it. She considers that you are better off going out to work and studying because then you don't stay at home and let thoughts just go round and round in your head.

RB3's Muslim faith is important to her. She believes that it is important to pray and respect your elders. However, she feels it is most important to live your life according to the faith rather then just pray; that it is more important to practise the faith.

RB3 prefers to live over here because in Bangladesh people suffer. Women are not able to go out on their own, they always have to be chaperoned and they have great difficulties surviving without a man. She likes living in the locality. She would like to visit Devon for a holiday because some friends have told her that it is a lovely place.

The older generation are stricter and the younger do what they want to do; they don't want to suffer.

RB3 wants her own children to have a good education and she would also like them to have an arranged marriage and hopes that they will choose to marry a Bangladeshi. Despite all, RB3 says 'I like to stay with my own country.'

Parents will want to know how well their children are doing at school but they will often not have the time to visit the school. They have to pray and cook; they are often too tired. They ensure that their children get to school on time and want them to do well. They also see their responsibility as teaching their children the Koran and taking them to the Mosque. Islam is for life, RB3 still reads the Koran and learns from it.

RB4 (who did not become an interviewee)

The interview took place in a Bangladeshi community centre

RB4 was the advice and information officer in the community development unit. She was born in Bangladesh and her younger siblings were all born and brought up in the UK. They are totally westernised and have no attachment to Bangladesh, in fact they can feel impatient with Bangladesh people. They respect their roots but have other opinions. She can speak Bangla and speaks in a Sylheti dialect but she isn't literate in this language. She came to London from Sylhet in 1963, when she and her mother joined her father who had a business in Battersea. Then a year later they moved to the locality. She considers herself to be British Bangladeshi and still feels a strong tie to Bangladesh. Her parents' -in-law still live over there. She wears Saris and western clothes. She does not live in the immediate locality.

RB4's grandfather had warned her that there were no trees in England so she was relieved to find that there were. She remembers the problem of not being able to speak the language nor knowing how people were going to react. However, they hired an English lady to look after her, teach her English, help her mother and prepare RB4 for school.

RB4 is aware that some parts of the Bangladesh culture are acceptable to young people and some not. She has decided to educate her own children into Bangladesh culture and religion (Muslim). She believes religion is very important, that it provides a purpose in life as well as being a way of life. She tries to help her children to understand this but it is difficult because they don't have Bangladeshi friends nearby. She mentioned that by contrast this particular locality the Bangladesh families mix a lot together. She feels it is important for her children to go to Bangladesh, meet their grandparents and enjoy their wealth and good weather out there. In Bangladesh they have big estate and house and receive a lot of friendliness and hospitality because they come from England. She wants to take her children on a sightseeing tour, to places like Cox's bazaar and the Chittagong tearooms. She also wants to ensure that they don't just see Bangladesh as a poor country. She would like her children to have a mixed up bringing and to know about their religion and culture as well as the British way of life. She feels that it is safer to bring up children in this country because the standard of health is so much higher.

For RB4 her family and her religion are the priorities. Although she doesn't find time to pray five times a day her religion is very important to her. It gives her a sense of peace and a knowledge that she can always turn to Allah whenever she wants. She feels it gives her and others a discipline and an awareness of others as well as the recognition that there is more to life then a material existence. She also appreciates the festivals. She feels it is important to keep the Elders happy and not to let them get too upset. RB4 also believes that if you help someone and they wish well for you – it works.

RB4 likes to live in England because it is a secure and healthy place to live. She wouldn't want to live in Bangladesh but she likes to visit it for holidays.

She is aware that the western culture can have a negative influence, that it carries its own diseases, such as divorce. Girls in their community run away from home and although the community can pretend that nothing is changing, it will have to wake up to the fact that there is a lack of understanding between the generations. She knows of families where the parents are very religious and yet their son has married an English girl.

RB4 lives in another area, which she is happy about. However, the other eighty percent of Bangladeshis she knows live in this locality because of the facilities and community centres. She feels it is important for all the different groups of South Asians to have their own centres. She feels that it is important that the women have a place to go to talk about their difficulties and ensure that they don't get too isolated.

There is less difference between generations if they are both educated. However, if the parents aren't and the children are then there can be problems. The young sometimes go along with their parents' to keep them quiet, they are not all allowed to do the things they do. She knows that a lot of the younger generation end up living a lie and she feels sorry for them. She feels especially sorry for young girls who can be caught between the two cultures and find it difficult to decide which culture to accept. She feels I should talk to or interview some of the younger generation. RB4 feels that if parents are educated they will encourage their children to be but that if they don't speak English and are not educated themselves it will be very hard for them. She realises some parents also put the Koran before school homework. She understands that parents are concerned about how well children do once they go to secondary school but that initially at primary school level their main concern is with Language.

RB4 is an exception in the centre in that she wears western clothes and doesn't worry about it when she does, she just feels good about it. She hopes it will give others the confidence to realise that people will still respect you even if you don't wear shalwar kameez or a sari. In fact it took her a long time to get used to wearing a sari but now she feels comfortable in it. She wears her orna (scarf) in an unconventional way and hopes that others will also have the confidence to experiment. She realises it does take a lot of confidence – which she has.

Some Bangladeshis she knows have married people from another race or religion. She would like her own children to marry Bangladeshis and would be disappointed if they didn't but it would be nothing new in her family if they didn't. In her own family she is the only one who has married a Bangladeshi, both her sister and brother have married White people. She would ultimately blame herself if her children did marry into another religion or race. She feels that if she had chosen to bring up her children in a more isolated way to ensure that they only mixed with Bangladeshis then it would be less likely to happen. She believes it is up to the child to decide what religion they take and that it is the duty of parents to teach them, she has left that to her husband. When she arrived in this area there were only five Bangladeshi families and no facilities for learning Arabic or attending Bangla classes.

She knows of families where the parents have sent their children off to private school or girls only schools and that the children are doing very well. However, she would not send her own children to private schools. She understands that people who have a low income do not consider the issue of gender, which is a concern for some more affluent Muslims.

RB4 feels that visits to Bangladesh are OK for eight to twelve weeks but, that taking children out of school for three to six months is not a good thing. She understands that if children are brought up in this country they will have to earn a living here and in that sense visits to Bangladesh are always for a holiday. She feels that three months is more than a holiday.

She feels that if I go out to Bangladesh I will gain knowledge of the cultural wealth of Bangladesh. I will see that the Bangladeshis are sometimes more westernised out in Bangladesh than those brought up over here. In particular the college girls in Dhaka as well as most people living in the cities are very westernised, because of sky and

cable television they are picking up western ideas very quickly. However, she realises that I will also see that people in the villages are very old fashioned.

RB4 feels that racism is definitely an issue but that she hasn't come across much while she has been working in this project. She feels that it is most likely to occur over issues of housing and the catering business. However, she knows that quite a few of the perpetrators locally are Afro Caribbean as well as White.

RB5 (who did not become an interviewee)

The interview took place in a Bangladeshi community centre

RB5 was born in Bangladesh and came to England in 1986, at the age of twelve. Initially, her father moved to England in 1960 and used to visit them over in Bangladesh every year. RB5 has retained a great belief in her culture and country. Ultimately she would like to return to Bangladesh to live. She believes her desire to return to live is unusual and originates in the fact that she was brought up there. For her to be a Muslim is most important:: if she was living in Bangladesh she would be surrounded by both other Muslims and also those of the same culture. She feels aware of the cultural barriers that surround her in the UK. Another priority is the family and she knows it would be easier to bring up a child into Bangladesh culture and language if s/he is educated and brought up there. She also feels that in her culture family connections are very important. Many of her family members are still out in Bangladesh. Furthermore, RB5 says that she has chosen to be strict about her culture.

RB5 says that when she first came over here it was a nightmare. She didn't speak the language and had to learn gradually through going to a language school. She also noticed the difference between the way in which girls behave. In the UK she realised that girls are more outgoing and free. She chose to avoid going out. She recognises that other people live in their own way and that she is also free to hold her different beliefs.

RB5 feels that this area is a nice place to live because it is multicultural and caters for different cultural requirements. However, she is concerned about the fact that there are problems with crime and that the schools aren't particularly good. She says that if she stays in the UK she will ultimately move out of the area. She would still want to visit the community and could still do so because she can drive. Also, if she had children she would take them to the local Bangladesh centre in to learn Bangla and to mix with other Bangladeshis. She understands that it is good to have all these different groups locally to accommodate the different languages and services required.

RB5 feels that parents can be too strict and that they should let their children have more freedom. She feels that children who are brought up in the UK need to be given more space and opportunity to go out with friends from different backgrounds. She feels that they need to know about the UK culture, to mix and to be able to get jobs.

RB5 anticipates that there will be more mixed marriages in the future and that although it is very difficult for Bangladesh parents to accept this, it will happen. She does realise how it affects the all the members of the family including nieces and nephews. She is concerned about the incidences of murder that are reported because of mixed marriages. She is also concerned that in her culture if a woman decides to break away and go alone she will ultimately be isolated and ostracised. She understands that this is the limitation of her culture and not of her religion. In the Muslim faith it is OK to marry someone of different beliefs as long as they become a Muslim once they marry. You can marry a Sikh or a White person, it would be the same as long as they became Muslim. However, for her culture there would be a problem marrying a Pakistani because of the difference of language.

Ultimately RB5 feels that if parents want their children to be brought up with the Bangladesh culture, and marry into it, that they should bring their children up in Bangladesh.

RB5 loves everything about Bangladesh; she loves the weather, the heat, the people and the community. She says that the people are much kinder and more helpful. For instance if someone is in trouble over there, people will come to help but over here they are a lot less supportive.

RB5 believes that the reason why some Bangladeshis are not doing well at school is, because like her, they have not been brought up here. She understands that things will improve the longer they stay. She also believes that it will be easier for parents to get involved because they too will be more knowledgeable. However, she does acknowledge that there is still a small group of families who don't let their daughters carry on into further education because they want them to get married. None the less she also knows that girls tend to do better and that boys tend to go on into the restaurant business, which doesn't require much school education.

In her own family her father was in the restaurant business but is retired now. She is qualified to get a job as a community officer and her husband intends to complete a social work course. He came over from Bangladesh with a Master's degree in psychology but his qualifications are not recognised over here. At present RB5 is employed in a local Bangladesh community as an administrator.

RP1 (eventually P1)
The interview took place at a Pakistani community centre

RP1 was born in Pakistan. She and her family came to the UK in 1961. She arrived at the age of five but her passport registered seven years: these additional years were advised for some unknown reason. The family moved locally as her father worked in the office and several of his colleagues moved locally at the same time.

RP1 still has several relatives out there in Pakistan both her maternal and paternal grandmothers still live there. In terms of her cultural heritage her relations with her In-laws are considered to be the most important. The link with her family out in Pakistan is very strong. Although RP1 feels that this tie will never break she also feels that she could no longer live in Pakistan. She feels that she has different morals and attitudes. She feels they are stricter in certain ways and that their local communities are more caring and broad minded. She also has noticed a growing materialism in Pakistan where everyone appears to be only concerned for their own needs and not concerned about others' welfare. RP1 finds this confusing especially as Pakistan is a predominantly Muslim country i.e. with a spiritual/ religious strength. However, she has noticed that those who return to the cities have a very different experience from those who return to the villages. The former often appears to be even more forward and modern in their outlook than they do here in the UK, though the converse is true of the villages. RP1 realises that here in the UK the community is affected by its minority position and works more rigorously to enforce its beliefs. By contrast the cities of Pakistan can rest assured that the Muslim faith and Pakistani culture will predominate and therefore can afford to be more adventurous in their developments. She is aware that Satellite TV has had a powerful and at times negative influence in Pakistan.

RP1 was disconcerted by the behaviour and atmosphere that her relatives expressed when she was last in Pakistan. They appeared to be more interested in what presents she had for them rather then in who she is as a person. She agrees that there may be some envy as the families out there still encourage their children to have arranged marriages with members in the UK. She acknowledges that she feels happier living in a society where there is greater equal distribution of wealth. In Pakistan the rich seem to get richer and the poor, poorer, there are also huge fluctuations in the economy out there. Taxes can go up 20% in a day. She feels as if her parents and her own generation have fostered a certain economic dependency in their relationships with their families over in Pakistan. She thinks the next generation will change this.

RP1 is happy to live in the UK. She, her family and community have all chosen to live in England, they have chosen to be married over here and to bring children up here. She feels that they have the best of both worlds; they have Islam and the best of the West. She feels they are very lucky here.

RP1 explained that for Asians the importance of the family originates from birth and retains an extended family dimension, though it is changing here, this is not the case in Pakistan. From an early age children get used to having all the family around all the time, a mutual dependency is established.

By contrast, RP1 sees the western family as quite lonely. At times she feels quite depressed when she thinks about it. Although she knows of western families that still have connections with their relatives she also knows of others who appear to be isolated individuals.

She agrees that the South Asian family considers that they are responsible for the social and moral/religious education of their children and that 'school' only represents one aspect of education. In particular the mother expects to educate her daughters to become dignified and respectable. They will represent the family honour.

The children attend the Mosque every evening to learn the Koran; they are separated by gender. First, they learn to read it – but as it is in Arabic- our equivalent to Latin – they don't understand it at that age. However, their teacher will translate it , and certain parts (the suras) are like our hymns and are more easily understood. Some learn by memory and then have it translated, most learn because they are required to do so. They can also opt to translate it for themselves through the use of dictionaries.

When there is a crisis (when for instance a teenager attempts to leave the family) the family tries by whatever means to get the child / teenager back. A family with such a child is considered to be dysfunctional. However, the family usually manages to pull through, as does the community. Gradually the family moves back into the community and receives their support but temporarily the family may decide to pull away from the community to resolve its problems. Even if the individual who has broken away opts not to circulate in the community, the family will find support among some of the community members. The community local is quite small and therefore it is often difficult to prevent gossip.

Every family has its own rules and regulations, some are much more orthodox than others (these inclinations are often those of the extended family as well). RP1's own family, in Jillum in Pakistan, all live in one long street, they live close to each other.

(I asked SP1 how the Asian community feels about this more assertive and strident centre as well as the others).
When community members first look at the name of the centre they assume that it is about helping their women to revolt- about making them more rebellious and difficult. However, when they learn that it is also about drug prevention and abuse as well as crime, they change their attitudes. In an Asian society it is difficult not to involve men, even if people agree that drug abuse and domestic violence are male generated. It is also difficult to get Asian men to undergo some counselling. Individual women who attempt to seek help outside their community can sometimes end up much worse off as much western assistance is unaware of the cultural/religious values and codes which the women are committed and accustomed to. In larger cities where the Asian population is much bigger and more established there are special centres run by Asian women to accommodate the needs of their women. In the Asian family the individual is always part of the family and the whole family is understood to be affected as a consequence of any individual's / couple's movements.

The equivalent women's groups do not exist in western society. The women's Institute appears to be too upper class or like a women's brigade and a feminist approach is too exclusively focused on women's rights. The Bangladeshi and Pakistani women's groups deal with whatever issues come their way. Their remit may not be domestic violence but they would rather give assistance to start off with, and then refer an individual or family to other sources of assistance if necessary. Although the Pakistani women's group is still small and focuses on women's needs, RP1 looks forward to the time when it can develop and assist others, for example young men.

Education is seen to be life long learning that has to be achieved. Islam is a way of life and the children have to know about it to live their lives in accordance with its concepts and guidance. Muslim teachings and beliefs are subtly reinforced by

mothers, they instruct their children about the ways in which to behave, how to stand, walk, present themselves etc. Ultimately there is an expectation that girls will turn out to be the same as their mothers. RP1 comments on how her daughter (who is sixteen) laughed when she noticed how like her mother she had become.

Education in Pakistan includes Islamic education. There are also moral codes, which ensue from the tenets of the Islamic faith that instil certain codes of behaviour, decorum and discipline into the days' proceedings and activities at school.

Parents expect to ensure that homework is completed and there is a lot more there than over here. Children take buses to the schools and as the parents are not invited to parents' evenings the parents seldom if ever visit, the school. Every child receives an end of term report and takes exams each year. Should the child fail and be required to stay in that form another year the parents will then employ a teacher to give extra tuition.

Individual attention in the class is unlikely because there are often 50 pupils to one classroom and teacher. Children are expected to memorise a lot and to pass exams annually starting form the age of six years. There are few resources and the focus is on the 3 'R's.

For girls education is more about understanding than about getting a job because they will seldom go into a job. That is unless they opt to do a subject like medicine. However nowadays the majority of girls do go to school and certain families encourage and support girls' education to degree level. Education can also imply that the family has the wealth to pursue it.

RP1 suggested she would have loved to have stayed on in school after the age of sixteen but family circumstances prevented this. Both her older sisters were married off, her mother was seriously ill and she had to make frequent visits to the hospital and her father had to run a demanding business. She was not that ambitious, her expectations had been for college not university and in the end she felt happier helping her parents. She returned to education in 1994 but had not minded leaving it till then. Her mother was never a selfish person and as soon as she felt more independent, (her illness abated at times), she made it easier for RP1 to be more able to study, do part-time work and bring up her own family.

Parents will be concerned about whether their child should have an arranged marriage with someone in Pakistan or not, these will be issues of loyalty. RP1 has already met the prospective parents of her daughter's future husband in Pakistan. Her daughter is happy about the arrangements. The young man will be coming over here to do a degree and is doing the equivalent of 'A' levels now.

Parents may also be concerned about how educated they want their daughter to become. Some worry about their daughter becoming too educated. Boys are allowed to do anything anyway but girls carry the family honour. However, this issue will not be a consideration at primary school level.

Fathers are often involved in communicating with the school because they are sometimes more fluent in English. Parents see their responsibility as teaching their children the Koran and other moral/ social lessons. They are happy to let the teachers do their part in the schools and not get involved. In part this is also because many have not been educated over here and don't yet understand the system, it is also because of language difficulties. However, while some are not confident to question or ask teachers about what is going on, RP1says that others can become

unreasonably confrontational towards a teacher as well as too defensive about their children.

The most important things in RP1's life are her husband, children, brothers, father, sisters and extended family. She wants to ensure a stable family for her children. Getting on with the community and having good health are also important. Wealth comes lower down the list.

Her faith is her way of life, it is a central part of her everyday life. She doesn't always manage to pray five times a day but her belief and involvement are there permanently. She realises that as she gets older she will look at things differently and have more time to be devout.

Education is also very important, near the top. However, her family remains at the heart of her life and their religious education a priority in contrast to the education at school. She does feel that both the children's education and way of life can be complementary. All her children go to private school. She took both her elder children to the Mosque every evening to learn the Koran. Though she is too busy with her community work to take her youngest there every evening, he goes to Urdu classes that have only recently become available. She is aware that her mother-in-law feels that she has put religion on the back burner because she isn't able to take her youngest to the Mosque every day. She hopes that her mother in law realises how busy she is. Although her children generally mix with White children at school, their attendance at the Mosque has kept them in touch with other Muslim children. She feels that you can never have enough of religious education because throughout life there is always so much it can teach you. She also feels that Islam is becoming more popular. Ten years ago it was more of a problem because there weren't enough Mosques, now Muslim mothers in particular work really hard at keeping the faith alive. If the mother is unable to do this, then other members of the family, older siblings, grandparents, etc take over.

She feels that the family has very deep roots. She understands that things are changing, that one has to be open to change and that it is good to try different things out to see if they are appropriate. She realises that her community's children will want to be part of the wider society whether the elders like it or not. However, she feels her responsibility is to help to guide them through. She feels that the changes that occurring are often positive; the family and religion are still at the core of their lives, though the young people may prefer the culture here more than the culture over in Pakistan. She wants to reinforce the links with Pakistan, not for her children to live over there, but for them to be married to people over there.

RP2 (who did not become an interviewee)

The interview took place at a Pakistani community centre

RP2 was born in Rajizabad in Pakistan and educated there until the age of sixteen. She loved it over there and misses, her friends, street and city. When she visited it five years later much had changed and now twenty three years later it is very different. She says that people still love each other but they have become very suspicious. They used leave their doors open all hours but now they always lock them. She says this is because there is fear of drugs and people carry guns, which they never did before.

RP2's grandfather came over in the nineteen twenties as an eye specialist and worked in Barton Hill (nearby). Her grandfather was very unfortunate because nearly all his children died. He eventually called his son over (her father) to be educated here. He then opted to live in the UK despite the fact that his children remained in Pakistan. This meant that RP2 seldom saw her father as she grew up and this created some unhappiness for her. Eventually when she was fifteen her father came over to marry her sister and brothers. Although he recognised her and spoke to her, she didn't trust him because she had never experienced his love. Eventually she said to him that she felt that the family must all live together, he then arranged for them all to move over to the UK. She regrets the fact that although he offered her an education over here she didn't take it up. She ended up doing factory work, which she didn't enjoy. She now lacks confidence when she tries to write in English. She can read and speak English but feels that her spelling is very inadequate.

RP2 had an arranged marriage but it never worked. They had different habits and were not suitable. She grew to dislike him, so now she is divorced. She is not happy with the fact that she is divorced but says that next time she marries she will feel more able to make a good decision. Her sister in Pakistan has found a suitable partner for her but, as she isn't employed at present, she is not in a position to invite him over. She also feels that she should take things slowly. She believes in arranged marriages. She understands that people are given the choice to decide from their heart whether they feel happy with a partner. She also feels it is important for families to check prospective partners out. Now that both her parents are dead she is happy that her siblings should find a suitable partner.

RP2 feels that the younger generation take their religion very seriously. She understands that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world.

RP2 feels that western people are lost, that they don't know themselves properly and that they are confused. She feels that their loss of religion has been a bad thing. She mixes with western women at a local community centre. They are encouraged to talk and perhaps cook and eat together. She is happy with these arrangements but has noticed that her women sit on one side of the room and the western women on the other, because, apart from other things, they speak different languages. She is very happy to mix with Sikhs. They wear similar clothes, eat similar food and speak the same language but the fact that they have different religions can cause problems. She has a nephew who married a Sikh girl (this was not an arranged marriage) and now her community are concerned that this young wife should become a Muslim. Her parents would rather she stayed a Sikh. She has just had a child and it is understood that she will become a Muslim.

She enjoys mixing with other Pakistani Muslims when they share ideas and considerations about their faith. She offered an example of the type of things they talk of. Apparently a young Catholic boy who lives in Kenya suddenly started to read the Koran at the age of four years and had learnt it all by the age of five. He then

converted 1000 people including his parents. This is seen as a miracle, that Allah has sent him to pass on the message of God.

RP 2 is a devout Muslim, she prays five times a day, carries out the very elaborate and particular washing rituals daily and enjoys observing all the various festivals and religious customs. RP2 believes that her God is very caring and that he is always there when his people call upon him. She believes he looks after his people and that they listen to him. She also believes that he sends earthquakes to remind the world that certain practices e.g. homosexuality, are not acceptable. Her religion accepts divorce but insists that a woman cannot leave her home for the first three months after she has separated. This is to ensure that the woman hasn't become pregnant by the husband she wants to separate from. She is then able to remarry after this time. RP2 says that this practice is observed because it is important to know who the father is, should she conceive.

RP2 says that although boys are preferred to girls in Pakistan, this is not the case with British Pakistanis. Pakistan is also less extreme than India about this issue. She says that in Pakistan, women don't go to have scans to see if they are carrying female foetuses and then have them aborted.

RP2 feels that parents will be happy for me to visit them in their homes. She also realises that some will not be able to speak English and that I shall have to rely upon their children to act as interpreters. She described a typical after school timetable. After school children come home and sit together before they go off to the Mosque at 4.45pm. they then return home at 6.30pm to have their supper. They are then allowed to watch TV for a while. After this they are expected to do homework. However, she says that although this is what happens in her sister's family, her sister also insists that her children are in bed by eight. However, other parents may not be so responsible and may allow their children to stay up watching TV until nine or twelve o'clock. None the less nearly all the parents will escort their children to the Mosque after school. It is understood that unless children are taught the Koran the religion cannot survive.

RP2 likes living in her local street. She is surrounded by other Asian people and one of her neighbours, who is a West Indian, is going to become a Muslim. However, she is not too happy about an Irish family who live across the road because they drink a lot and tend to shout and knock at her door late at night. She ignores them. She was very moved by an elderly White woman, who has died now. This woman had a little mat/rug that she used to put her plate on at meal times. RP2 noticed it had the words of Allah and his family woven into it. RP2 was unhappy about this and offered to buy it from the elderly woman. The woman gave it to her and it now hangs on the wall in her sitting room.

RP3 (who did not become an interviewee)

The interview took place at a Pakistani community centre

RP3 was born and educated in Pakistan. She comes from a relatively wealthy family in Pakistan and her own family still lives over there. Her father – in – law has a factory, a big business, and they have a big house and live very well out there. She has four brothers. She went to university and gained a degree in psychology. She came over here for an arranged marriage and her husband is a civil engineer and previously had a good business over here, so that is why they live here. She does not like working and is grateful to Allah that her life is as she would like it to be. There is no need for her to work. She is content living in the UK. It is her husband's wish and that is how it is.

RP3 goes back to Pakistan every two years, she goes in the Spring and at Easter time and her children have been as well. She loves Pakistan and lives well out there when she visits.

RP3 mentioned that to be a Muslim, you have to pray five times a day and teach your children the Koran.

RP3 says that the two most important things about being a Pakistani woman are your husband and your children; they are equally important. She said that your religion is also important.

RP3 accepts living here and says that you learn about other people and that she lives her own life over here. When I asked if she felt there were any problems living over here, she responded by asking me if I found any. My response was that I have always lived here, I have my family and friends over here and that I would have difficulties understanding the values and languages over in the subcontinent. RP5 did not agree that this was a difficulty. She believes that if you want to do something, you try hard and you learn.

She is feels no problem about bringing her children up here and understands that you always gain certain things and lose out on others

RP3 believes that if you talk to each other and are friendly and don't keep secrets that there isn't a problem. She understands that children require a certain amount of freedom and that what they can or cannot do requires a certain amount of reflection. You have to decide what they can and can't do. She does feel there is a 'thinking gap' between the generations. However, in her own family she was allowed the freedom to go off into the city and study at university and therefore her parents were relatively open minded and trusted her.

RP3 believes that children learn a lot at school and that her children must learn the Koran at home as well. She takes the responsibility to teach her children this and her daughter had learnt the script and the meanings by the age of ten.

As recorded above, RP3 expressed a confidence and pragmatism about how to deal with life. She believes that people can do any thing if they really want to as long as they are prepared to work hard. She also believes that there are certain things one accepts and respects, for instance your husband's wishes. She feels that ultimately wherever you live there will be good things and bad things and that it is not better to live in Pakistan or in the UK. In both places, she is content with her life.

RP4 (who did not become an interviewee)
The interview took place in RP4's home

RP4 arrived in the UK at the age of eleven years. She came from Azad Kashmir. Over there, she still has some relatives and they live in a big house, however, most of her relatives live over here now. She did a language course once she arrived in the UK and then went to secondary school here. She is now in her late twenties.

RP4 feels that the education in Pakistan is excellent and she can remember much of what she was taught there. It is a totally different experience to over here.

Children in Pakistan take their education very seriously and there is a lot of pressure to complete homework (of which there is a lot) and to pass the exams every year. In Pakistani schools, children are not allowed to muck about. Over in Pakistan you do not shout at your teachers, they are like your second parents and you respect them. However, RP4 said that she hated the punishments. This could mean being hit on the hand with a ruler.

Religion is included in the school curriculum; you have Urdu, Punjabi, Islam, history and geography, in fact all the subjects on one day. She didn't learn any English over there. For the exams you are expected to answer questions, which include writing short stories or essays. You cannot go on to the next class, whatever your age, until you have passed the exam. In class you have to listen until the teacher has finished her lecture and then ask questions. She feels that education over here is generally much easier. She found that what was required in English easier and the Maths similar. She thinks that it would be possible to go over to Pakistan and slot into the syllabus over there, however, that you would be expected to work harder and to be more dedicated.

Parents are not involved. If they come from the villages they check that their children do homework but cannot assist them with it.

The faith is a way of life and you start learning about it from the age of six months. Prayers are integrated throughout the day. It is an essential and vital part of life.

RP4 describes herself as a British Pakistani. She feels that she accepts two cultures and a sense of belonging over here. She feels that both her and her community have changed their ways of thinking and that it would not be possible to live in Pakistan now. Although things have changed in Pakistan, in that women are more educated, they are not allowed to exist as independently as they are over here. RP4 does love Pakistan and if she was wealthy enough, not to rely upon a man, she would live over there. She loves the open air, the lack of pollution and the people. In the communities she knows she feels cared for. If she is ill they come and do her washing for her and attend to her. People still remember her from years ago and she is very touched by this.

RP4's father has worked hard to own land and a house out in Pakistan as well as in the UK. However, she feels that though she is happy to go there on holidays, she wouldn't want to live there. She feels there is a definite difference between the generations. The young accept two cultures and the elders are still more traditional. She also feels that things have changed for the younger generations, she is happy to go to McDonalds in her Shalwar Kameez and people do not call her 'Paki' any more. Some of her English friends say they would love to be able to wear her clothes. Younger Asian people also enjoy wearing western clothes and she feels that the elders should go along with this. Most of the women speak Punjabi or Urdu as well as English. She says that despite the odds the Asian community remains very close.

When RP4 does go to Pakistan, she does feel more secure in some ways. She is surrounded by her own language, culture and religion. She doesn't feel like an outsider. In some senses she feels at home. Over here in her local area although everyone is very close, because it is a small community, they are aware of the differences. These differences are manifest in ways of dressing, behaviour and beliefs. Originally India was one with Pakistan, but since the Partition, differences became very established out on the subcontinent and people are always aware of them. There are differences in terms of behaviour, for example, a close friend who is also a Muslim, but not from Pakistan would greet an elder quite differently. Her friend would go down on her knees and touch his/her feet. However, RP4 would be very respectful, speak more clearly and slowly but not go down on her knees. Apart from dress there are other way in which differences are felt. As soon as someone speaks you know that their language is Hindi rather then Punjabi or Bengali- even if they are trilingual.

However, RP4 does appreciate the way in which you learn about other cultures by living in Easton. Here she mixes with Somalians and English as well as the South Asian community. She feels very free with everyone but she feels that the one thing that is most important to her, and which is often different, is her religion. Otherwise, she feels there is nothing holding her back from mixing.

RP4 was married at seventeen and divorced at nineteen. It was terrible for her family, especially for her father. She is the eldest and her father is very attached to her, he was very upset that she had been so unfortunate and left his relatives to support her. She had a nervous break down and her father developed diabetes and heart problems. She has no children and has suffered a lot. It has taken about five years for the situation to change and she now feels a lot stronger. She feels that her religion helped her enormously. She felt disturbed inside and questioned her need to divorce but her religion was a reassurance. It reassured her that it was OK to divorce and to be free to marry again if necessary. Her parents would still help her to make another arranged marriage but this time her own feelings would have more prominence. Although she feels that her family, especially her father, supported her brilliantly when she divorced, during that time she often felt it was difficult to explain to them how she felt. She is very happy to continue living with them for the moment (she enjoys still feeling like their little daughter) but during her crisis she also discovered the importance of friends. She was able to share her feelings with them.

She now feels more independent and her own boss but at moments quite alone. She feels that everyone deserves a partner. She feels she is still her father's little girl and is secure and happy in some ways. She now feels that education is more important than a career. She left school at fifteen, got married at seventeen and then became too weak to study or work. Her work in the factory was not easy; she would want a different job in the future. She considers that it is never too late to study and has completed a course in counselling, an English course, and presentation and assertiveness courses. These have been achieved with the help of a family friend. It made her aware of where she was and who she is.

RP4's youngest brother is now sixteen and she has seen her parents involved in all her younger siblings' education at school. She has also seen them take their responsibility in terms of the teachings of the Koran. They supported both types of education. Their children had learnt the Koran by the age of ten and her parents went to visit the school if there were any problems with their children's progress at school. They also supported their children by encouraging them to attend homework clubs.

RS1 (eventually S1)
The interview took place in a local Gurdwara (Sikh Temple)

RS1 was born and brought up locally. Her parents come from Jullundar, an area of the Punjab that is made up of small villages. Her father arrived here around 1957/8 and her mother followed in 1962/3. Both her and her parents return to their village in the Punjab annually. Her husband comes from the same area and was brought up in the Punjab. His parents are still over there and RS1 likes to keep her two children in touch with them through these visits. Her children are eight and five years old. At these ages she knows that they enjoy the flight. However, recently the eldest enquires about his grandfather. This grandfather managed to come over and live in the UK for 6 months some time ago. RS1 is employed as a nurse.

RS1 made it clear that Sikh marriages are now called marriages of 'consent' and not arranged marriages. This reflects a change in attitude and perception. There is more negotiation nowadays. RS1's matchmaker was her husband's sister. Prior to their marriage her husband worked and lived over in Belgium for three years. During that time RS1's brother went over to meet him to check him out. RS1 understands that their interest in India is also related to the fact that they still have relatives out there and that her husband was brought up there. She knows that other members of the South Asian community who have never lived there are not always interested in India.

RS1 believes in her identity as a Sikh and follows the rituals and values entailed. This was not always the case. When she was younger she thought that it was boring and didn't understand what was being said in the ceremonies. As her parents were illiterate they couldn't always explain things to her. However, once she had children she felt drawn to discover more, to be able to answer their questions and give them more information. As a consequence she began to realise how important Sikhism is to her.

RS1 says that her belief in the Sikh religion and culture is not just to do with her identity, it is much more than that. She says, ' It is from deep within. It is about having a God and knowing about him. It is about being satisfied with yourself, with who you are and, respecting people around you.' She says that being a Sikh on your own is as powerful as being one in a congregation of Sikhs. Being on your own demands more dedication. It demands that you carry out your vows to pray in the morning and stick to your vows.

She understands the dilemma that some young Sikhs face when they are unsure of their Sikhism. She went through that phase herself, however, being married to someone who comes from India has helped her to feel connected to her roots and Sikh identity. It has helped her to find out who she is. Her husband no longer wears a turban and they feel able to decide for themselves what is important to them. Originally she wanted to be like White people, she wanted to fit in and belong. She said that she didn't want to look like a Christmas tree!. However, now she realises that you can't change who you are. She has found her identity as a Sikh and feels happy to walk around locally and not care what other people think. She says that you are discriminated against because you are black anyway.

She realises that being a Sikh demands a huge commitment. She understands why young people who have been born and brought up in the UK, have good jobs and their own families now, do not feel the same attachment to Sikhism as she does. She loves Bangra music and blends of Asian and western music and art but she says she used to like them more. Nowadays she is more interested in her Sikh identity.

When Sikhs take their vows they commit themselves to eating and drinking with the same utensils as any other Sikh whatever their caste. However there is a hierarchy and to some extent this is reflected in the existence of different Gurdwaras in the outer local. However, RS1 explains that there is a caste that have a Gurdwara in a more central local area that have become very well educated and moved up several castes. This caste was originally composed of crafts people but they are now professionals. The education system is changing the status of individuals and groups. RS1 says that the caste system is still much more in existence in India.

RS1 went to a local comprehensive. There she felt very aware of being segregated and of racism. She believed that the staff had much lower expectations of her as an Asian pupil. She grew up with their attitude and learnt to expect it. None the less she did well because her brother always encouraged her and pushed her. Her parents were also enthusiastic because they wanted her to do better then they had done.

RS1 believes that the reason why some Asian children do so well is because their parents encourage them to make the most of opportunities. Originally, in India a child didn't need to have a good education to do well because s/he could end up working on farms and for this type of occupation education was irrelevant. Here parents understand that a good education will give you a better chance of a good job. She is also aware that things are changing in India as there are fewer landowners and farm work is not so easy to come by.

RS1 understands that the older generation came over with very orthodox views and that initially their children, like her, automatically adopted their views. However, once the second generation went to school they realised that there were other perspectives and had to choose between them. Those like her still opted to stay with their elders' views. She didn't realise the depth of her religion when she was younger. She believes that it is up to her children to choose what they want to believe in. However, her husband is convinced that they will stay Sikhs. RS1 is still in touch with western friends who accept her for who she is. They think that the ceremonies are lovely.

RS1 thinks that it is a good thing that there are different facilities for different groups in locally. She feels that the Bangladeshis tend to keep to themselves more. She understands that their culture is more important for them than their religion. She has a Hindu friend and her husband has Muslim friends through his work. He socialises with them but doesn't want her to. She accepts that everyone has to lay down their own boundaries and this one is one he feels reassured by. She says that she leads such a busy life anyway that this restriction doesn't matter to her.

Originally when she first lived in locally there were few Asian people and two Muslim girls used to go around with them at school. However, now that there are so many more South Asians they have opted to create or develop their own, more particular groups. RS1 senses that Muslim men set a lot tighter boundaries and don't allow their women and children so much freedom. Both the two Muslim girls she knew didn't get good jobs and wanted to work at home.

RS2 (who did not become an interviewee)

The interview took place in RS2's home.

RS2 was born and educated in India until the age of nineteen. She came over here to marry at twenty in 1982/3.

When she first arrived she felt completely lost because she couldn't read or write any English. She said this made her feel really frustrated. She went to college and started a part-time job in a sweet factory. However, in the factory she felt dominated by her sister who always spoke for her. She decided to get another job where she could establish herself more and there she asked the manager to speak to her more clearly. She found the English spoken in India easier to understand. She says that people speak it more clearly there. She used to live some way away but moved here recently into a bigger house. They live on a busy main road outside the immediate locality in a more prosperous area.

RS2 is happy living in the UK but misses her family she said, " that is my worst part". The family have been visiting relatives in the Punjab every year for the last three or four years. All her mother's family live out there, however, all her husband's family all live here. She also knows that she would find employment over there.

RS2 has completed an Open University Course in the UK as well as having had an Indian education. She found that her school in India gave her a much better foundation level of education than her children receive over here. In fact her sister-in-law sent her own children to India from the age of nine to the age of fourteen so that they could learn the Indian languages. Consequently these children are bilingual and much better at Maths. RS2 prefers the Indian system of education. She says that in India you learn more from books, the standard generally is quite high and the theoretical work better. She was interested to discover that a business studies course she completed in India was almost identical to an economics 'A' level that a relative took over here.

However, RS2 feels that the resources are better over here and knows that her children are accustomed to living here and would therefore prefer to be educated here. She also agrees with the applied aspect of teaching over here. She understands that this more practical and applied approach helps to develop the children's retention of information.

She takes her children over to India for a couple of weeks at a times but feels that they would need to stay there for six months to really acquire a knowledge and understanding of India. She also realises that due to recent legislation it is becoming more difficult for children to spend time out of school.

RS2 believes that being a Sikh teaches you about the discipline of life and teaches you an understanding of your life. She says that if you are a proper Sikh you put your beliefs into practice. She says that some children study the history of Sikhism and learn to respect and understand it but sometimes it is very hard for them to gather an understanding of a mixture of cultures. She says that it depends upon what she herself teaches her children. Her children go to the Temple to learn Punjabi and are involved in the festivals. She understands that she can't put them under too much pressure. She tells them things when they are sitting down to eat and when the atmosphere is relaxed. She also wishes that they learnt more about Sikhism at school. She says there have been opportunities that the teacher has ignored even though the teacher has promised the parent(s) that she will include this subject in the course work. She believes that even if there are only one or two Sikh children in the class it is vital to include an understanding of their beliefs in the classroom.

She feels happy to mix with many different groups of people, English, Gujarati, Bengali and Muslims. She finds mixing very interesting.

RS2 recognises that there are good and bad things in all societies. She also acknowledges that there is a great deal of difference in the way in which people of the same culture bring their children up. However, she respects parents who instil some discipline in their children's lives. She does not like the way that there is little respect for the elderly in western society. However, she feels that this apparent lack of concern is inevitable because when children are young they are cared for by baby sitters. This means that they are introduced to segregation between the generations as a way of life. She prefers her own culture where children are included in social activities and there is a sense of responsibility towards all generations.

The history of Sikhism is very important to Sikhs. It illustrates the struggle they have had to maintain their beliefs and practices. RS2 is very proud of this history, she is proud of the emphasis on the equality of women and understands that you have to fight for equality. However, she feels that some of the younger generation can be quite rude when they criticise their elders and their religion.

RS2 believes that the Muslim religion has a different attitude towards its women. The women don't appear to have as much freedom, tend to get married earlier and not work outside the home. However, she doesn't feel it is their choice to 'cling to the home'. The women also keep to themselves more and are quieter. She feels that Muslims are closer to Hindus because of their origins but also understands that culture can be stronger than religion. She notices that the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis keep apart even though they share the same religion.

RS2 believes that if she respects herself then others will respect her. If she pretends to be western by wearing western clothes then it will be ineffectual. She wears western clothes for her own pleasure. When she wears the shalwar kameez or a sari she is more careful about how she matches the colours.

RS2 is happy to assert herself if she is has a problem with the school or other people. She says that if she has a problem at the school her children attend she will not get angry but she will want to find out what they think, how they understand the problem.

RS2 feels that South Asian children can be a bit behind sometimes because of their lack of English but also because they don't get the appropriate help from the teachers. She senses that teachers tend to categorise South Asian pupils as quiet but she knows that they aren't at home. 'I get surprised... it makes me think...the teacher ought to give the child more attention instead of leaving the child alone because it is quieter...it makes me cynical because [when I have questioned the situation] the Head teacher stands by the teacher and I realise it doesn't help to complain. RS2 believes that education is very important; that it is children's start in life and, that the child will have to build upon that foundation. She would rather be told that her child has a problem such as being distracted at the beginning of the year because then it is possible to do something about it. She was shocked when her son's teacher said that boys concentrate less in primary school. She felt it was unprofessional to speak like that, that it was an excuse. She also felt it was misguided to think that the child will somehow do better at secondary school. She believes that it is the teacher's responsibility to deal with the issue and not to leave it until secondary level.

Her own experience with her children has made her cynical. She says you have to be very positive and determined because a teacher can shut a child up. The teacher can underestimate the intelligence of a child. Her daughter works very hard and is usually top of the class but had a problem with maths. RS2 went to see the teacher to find out how she could help. She said that though the teacher was a very nice teacher she had the wrong attitude and understanding. The teacher felt that the child's lack of success was due to a lack of ability. RS2 believes that there is always a gap to improve in. She encouraged her child to keep going back to the teacher and ask for explanations when she didn't understand. In the end her child did really well. Her teacher had predicted that she would get a level 3 but in the end she got a level 5.

RS2 believes that education is extremely important for children. For her it matters less what they wear. She feels that education is a gift, it is the way children can achieve something and learn to stand on their own feet.

She has worked in a nursery. There she loved the children and got on with all the parents. She read with the children and taught them how to cook, they loved the cooking so much that they did it at home and the parents enjoyed it too.

RS2 would be upset if her children didn't have arranged marriages but ultimately believes it has to be the child's choice. She is happy with her own arranged marriage and cynical about love marriages. She notices how these marriages don't seem to last any length of time. In the West she sees how partners leave and one partner is left with the responsibility of the child. She thinks this is very hard. Her experience of her arranged marriage was that her parents allowed her to choose her husband. She says she can't speak for other families.

RS3 (who did not become an interviewee)

The interview took place in a local Sikh community centre.

RS3 and her husband have always lived in the UK. They have an arranged marriage. Both originate from small villages in the Punjab. Her father is very religious so she was educated about Sikhism and spoke Punjabi at home. She would love to have been able to go to India but has never been able to afford the time or expense. She has always been concerned about her children missing school as she wants them to do well – better then she did. One of her daughters (she has two daughters and a son) went to the Punjab with her grandparents and loved it. However, as all her relatives live over here there is less necessity to go to India.

RS3 enjoys living in the UK; she has her work (she has been working as a helper locally for twelve years now). She has the Sikh community to circulate with and all her family live over here.

RS3 believes in arranged marriages and hope that her children will have them.

For RS3 the most important aspect of her life is her family. This comes first. She also believes that Sikhism encourages respect, especially respect for elders and the importance of listening to them. She also believes that it is important to show a commitment by the way you dress. However, she knows individuals and families who only wear their Shalwar kameez when they go to the Gurdwara and wear western clothes at other times.

Things have changed, women often go out to work and parents are less strict. Most women go out to work out of financial necessity and this changes the expectations of the culture and women's experiences. However in most households the mother is still seen as the person who is responsible for keeping children under control. None the less individual families vary, for instance in her marriage both her and her husband are responsible for their children.

RS3 agreed that there are some tensions between the generations that didn't exist before. For example she mentioned that her children, daughters or son can be quite assertive and tell their elders to be quiet if they want to do homework and the elders are playing music loudly. This is something she accepts in a practical way because she understands that her children need to do their work. However, her father or another elder would find this situation very difficult and feel insulted by such behaviour.

RS3 likes the fact that there are many different groups locally in particular the fact that women have somewhere to go to talk. She also realises that due to historical reasons some Sikhs dislike Muslims. She likes to stay with her own group anyway. Although there are different Gurdwaras, Sikhism as a religion encourages everyone to mix and RS3 says that many attend the Gurdwaras regularly. However, there are also more people, including women who go to work now and this makes attendance more difficult.

When RS3 was at school (in London) she had a lot fewer opportunities than her children do now. This is because her parents spoke hardly any English, didn't know about what was expected at school and had nine other children to cater for. She sees education as the opportunity for working towards a good job. She also agreed that school is a social place, and that at school children learn more then just how to pass exams. Her own children mix with other groups to different degrees. One daughter mixes with white friends and the other has many Pakistani friends. Her son mixes with everyone. Her mother never went to work and although RS3 really enjoys her

work, in part because it takes her out of the house, she would like her children to have better jobs then she has.

RS4 (who did not become an interviewee)

The interview took place in RS4's home.

RS4 was born in India in the Punjab but came to the UK at the age of one. She was brought up and educated in Birmingham. She moved to London when she married at the age of fifteen, had her first child at the age of sixteen and bought a house in Birmingham when she was sixteen. RS4 has been to India several times but she only went the first time when she was in her late twenties, she went because a sister was getting married over there. She still feels very connected with India though over the years fewer of her relatives live there, some have died, and the rest live in England.

She moved to London because her husband came from that area but kept returning to Birmingham. When she was pregnant (she has five daughters and several grandchildren) her mother-in-law didn't live in London and she benefited from the support her own mother could give her. She bought her house in Birmingham by using the £500 her mother had given her for a wedding present. She moved back to London another time where her third daughter was born because her husband always felt more at home in London. However she returned to Birmingham later and bought a shop so that her husband, who had always mixed with Asians and spoke little English was more able to find self-employment that way, than employment in other ways. She says this is often the case for Asian people. If they become self – employed, then they don't have to worry about: their lack of English, educational qualifications and competing in a world where they may experience racial prejudice. However, though RS4 spoke Punjabi at home she learnt English at school and also Sunday school. She chose to go to Sunday school because it was a social activity that took her out and her mother was fine about it because she is very religious and there were no Gurdwaras in her area at that time.

RS4 found that living at home and going to school meant that you led a double life. She says that is something that still goes on.

Arranged marriages do not necessarily work and those of her five daughters that are married have all been unsuccessful arrangements. One has remarried but none of the others have done so. In general her daughters are very westernised and her youngest, who is seventeen is going to university. This youngest holds some resentment about being Asian and would really like to be White. However, though her youngest feels this way and has chosen not to learn or talk Punjabi she really enjoyed visiting India and felt connected there. RS4 has moved with her daughters' ideas and feelings but her own mother has remained very traditional and feels unhappy about the changes. RS4 herself experienced problems in her marriage and separated for many years. Though the community were very violent about this in the beginning, over the years she has continued to visit the Gurdwara, talk to the women there and told them about her involvement with women's groups and the wider society. Her continued presence and contact with them has made her accepted in the community. Now she lives again with her husband and she has also established much more of a role for herself in the Asian community.

Her experience of the other groups, such as western women's groups makes her realise the importance of talking about feelings and not just work or religion. She considers that such a facility should be developed in the community. Though women get help from the community centres they don't all get help and there is a way in which they are still shunted around from one group to another without being really understood or helped at a deeper level. She would like to see more discussion groups in the future.

RS4's experience of the world outside the local Sikh community her children's own response and the separation in her husband has made her cautious about traditional Asian values, such as the family or religion. She has not brought her children up to be religious and they never went regularly to the Gurdwara. She says that the western women have their own way of finding gurus and the equivalent of religious guidance and thinking by going to therapies and seeing counsellors. She assumes that Christianity is adhered to in the same way as Sikhism. However, she does acknowledge that the social life of the Gurdwara as a community centre on Sundays is different.

She feels that a lot of the emphasis on the importance of the family in Asian cultures is a myth in terms of the realities. She knows that there are many elderly people who are left alone for long periods of time, some in sheltered accommodation and others, though at home, seldom have family around because they all go off to work for long hours. She says that a lot of the emphasis on the family, which others may articulate to an outsider or even among themselves, is based upon a sense of loyalty and protectiveness about their identity and cultural values. In fact the young people still live double lives and wish to do things in a more western way these days. Many would probably like to employ baby sitters and not take any responsibility for their elders- whom they can often feel live in a different world. She feels that the problems that Asian families encounter are the same as those encountered in western families. She says that the Asian family can be very supportive, or alternatively torturous. She really dislikes many members of her extended family, though she loves her husband and daughters. She knows that one of her brothers that she doesn't particularly get on with would help her in a crisis. She also understands that he does it because he wants to keep up his reputation, and not because he either understands or necessarily cares for her. She says that there are a lot of rules that bind Asian families to sustain the Izzat (family honour). Her mother judges a woman she meets in terms of how she gets on with and respects her family; and not on the value of the person in their own right.

RS4 has tried out many things and enjoys western understandings and ways. However, she ultimately values the Asian community a lot and feels that it has very important things to offer her.

RS4 understands that a crucial aspect of Asian identity is physical appearance. If you look Asian then it works both ways: the community acknowledges you as one of them and you can feel a sense of affirmation and belonging that way. Though her daughters are sceptical about Sikhism on one level, they love the festivals. She says that though many younger people, like her daughters, ask questions about their religion which their elders have not yet found answers for, they do enjoy the festivities. On this level, she says that Asian identity is to do with religious affiliation. Her daughters also awoke to their Asian identity when she took them to India and arranged for her mother, herself and them to go on a pilgrimage to the foothills of the Himalayas. They loved that experience. This also enhanced their identity in terms of being 'Indian'. RS4 likes to wear both western and Asian clothes and is happy that her daughters do as they wish. She appreciates western values in terms of the discussions and debates that take place in women' s groups and feels that this should exist for all women in the Asian groups.

RS4's identity as a Sikh has always been something she appreciates as far as she can remember. However, the things that probably keep her involved with her Asian identity on a deeper level, start from a physical identity and develop into a great appreciation of the sophistication and diversity of the Subcontinent where her origins lie.

RS4 knows parents who are daunted by the educational system. She spoke to one just recently who said that she went to a SAT's (National Curriculum tests) meeting for parents of seven year olds at the school and came out feeling that what the children were supposed to do was like what seventeen year olds have to do. Her own experience with her youngest who is going to university is similar. She knows nothing about universities and feels both ignorant and also unable to be of any assistance. She is fortunate to know western families and others who have an experience of universities and can be of some assistance. Otherwise it is a great problem for parents; their children are resentful towards them for not understanding and they feel ignorant. Even though she was brought up in the UK many members of her extended family have stayed within self-employment and have not ventured into the world of education. She knows a teacher at a local Comprehensive who also confirms that this problem is a serious problem for many Asian families. The parents also see their responsibilities as lying outside the school. They are busy over-worked in factories and are focused on teaching their children other things.

As mentioned earlier RS4 feels a sense of belonging and value about the community. She also likes the fact that there are several groups and growing resources for the women in the community and she would like to help develop these. She also sees how this growing diversity and complexity of the community to some extent replicates the diversity of India. It is a microcosm and also full of change and development.

APPENDIX TWO:INTERVIEWS WITH THE FAMILIES

This appendix includes all the summaries from the two visits to the families. All the interviews with families took place in the family home. The families are coded as follows; F= family; B= Bangladeshi, P=Pakistani and S= Sikh; 1- 3 or 4 = numbers of families, order is not important. If the family has a relationship to one of the pupils in the group interviews s/he is identified at the beginning.

FB1

This family had a son C4(B) who was in the class the researcher worked in and carried out the pupil group interviews in. The family was composed of six members including the parents.

Notes from the first visit in October 1999

C4 (B)'s mother was very friendly; offered me tea and chocolates. She understood quite a bit of English and smiled a lot. I told her that I was only studying C4 (B)'s class and Asian communities in this locality. They have three sons and a baby daughter of eight months who can stand up. There is a brother of thirteen and a half who goes to the local secondary school and C (B) and his little brother go to the local school the researcher was studying as her main school.

The sitting room was well arranged and comfortable and the family sat around with the baby in the middle of the floor. C4 (B) speaks Bangla and goes to Bangla classes from 12-2 pm on Sundays. He also takes himself to the Mosque/ Bangladesh centre to learn Arabic and the Koran almost every day at about 4.00 pm. His mother also teaches them from the Koran.

They moved here thirteen years ago, she came over to marry and was brought up in Sylhet. They all love being there; visiting relatives. C4 (B) didn't go to school there. The food is very hot out there and there is every sort of food! The mother was eating bettelnut when I came in and wears saris all the time. She is learning a little English. She supports her children by taking them to school. I've also met her at the Bangladesh centre on Sundays. The family atmosphere with the mother and children seemed very serene.

I have to rely upon C4 (B) or her eldest son to translate. The mother thought that the reason why another mother was not able to speak any Bangla was because her mother had died. (I understood therefore that the mother and not THE FATHER is responsible for teaching Bangla and also from the Koran?).The mother can read the Koran but doesn't speak or write any Arabic. She does speak Bangla and Sylheti and can speak Hindi and though she understands Punjabi; she finds it more difficult to read. She would like to study but has a small child.

She said that Bangladesh is full of water; that education is harder there and that it is very important to learn the Koran to be able to be a Muslim.

They have relations in Newcastle and Surbition, near Heathrow. I told them that I have two children aged twelve and fifteen and that I live in locality near the market.

C4 (B) was very friendly and translated really well even though the television was on all the time.

Second visit in March 2000

C4 (B) had to translate for his mother nearly all the time and this was difficult at times though he tried very hard and did very well. His mother was eager to express things to me but we found language differences a real barrier.

C4 (B)'s mother likes both the country and the city. She likes Dhaka because there are more facilities there but she likes Sylhet because she was born there and her relatives live there. However, she does think that Dhaka is too popular; that as the politicians and wealthy live there they monopolise the resources and as a consequence places like Sylhet remain poor.

She likes the Azan in Bangladesh and she would prefer it if there were more religious practice here. She would like it if there were Islamic schools in this city and more Bangladeshi culture here. She feels that the UK is richer and yet Bangladesh has very respectful/good people. She feels that because more people work in the UK there is less time and it is harder to look after children and get child-care; in Bangladesh relations always help out.

She told me that the Azan is a fixed time to make God happy. She does enjoy it but without proper time allocated she still has so much other work to do here that she doesn't always have the time to pray that she'd like to. She says that in Bangladesh there is more time because the Azan allows for this time. Here you have to look at the clock all the time and over here when you want to pray you can't always find the right time.

When I read her the letter from a young Bangladeshi woman she laughed but said that it is the same for all in the Muslim culture, everywhere. As a woman you have to get married; she got married at eighteen and had a son a year later. Sometimes in Bangladesh girls are married at ten years old. However, there is more choice to study first now. If her little daughter studies and passes her exams then she will have more choice.

In this country she does walk around on her own more because there is no one else around to walk with.

She says that the schools are different in Bangladesh and the UK; there are different subjects. In Bangladesh the R.E. is different and there is no P.E only skipping competitions, musical chairs, which she won, and cricket as a sport. Parents in Bangladesh are expected to control their children more. She would definitely expect C4 (B) to be sent home if he misbehaved. In either place she would go and pick up her children.

FB2

This family had a son C2(B) who was in the class the researcher worked in and carried out the pupil group interviews in. The family was composed of five members including the parents, but excluding a cousin who was staying. They were related to FB4's family. They were also the family used as an in-depth example in the study of the Bangladeshi family in mode one, chapter five.

First visit in October 1999

THE FATHER spoke English well. The family were very relaxed; shared their photographs of Bangladesh and were very happy for me to drop in anytime. I told them that I was doing research and wanted to create a positive portrait of their culture and beliefs and home life so that schools and educational authorities understood their way of life better.

I learnt that they came from Sylhet and that THE FATHER arrived here twenty-five years ago. They have lots of relatives out there and their own house that they are very proud of. The children have visited Bangladesh earlier this year for three months and loved it. One child got ill because of the heat but still loved it. They like to live here for the comfort but also like to return for long visits as long as it doesn't interfere with school for the older children. THE FATHER is very relaxed and hopes to be elected as a treasurer for the Bangladesh community. (I later found out that he was elected). Although they are Muslim they don't seem at all fanatical about it. The children don't speak very good Bengali (so they say) but can communicate fine with their mother who speaks hardly any English. Their photos of Sylhet were very beautiful – groups of people in saris, shalwar kamis and lungis. The mother wears amulets and a little book of the Koran around her neck. They made a birthday cake while they were out in Bangladesh but had no candles; it was a real novelty there. The older children liked Dhaka as well.

The room was fairly empty but with a warm atmosphere. There is also a front room, which is for guests and prayer. In the back room the TV was on all the time with Indian programs and the family moved over to watch it intermittently while I was there. In general I talked to THE FATHER. I was offered a meal and given delicious tea and biscuits. THE FATHER said that though he doesn't have good qualifications; he is employed and he wants his eldest son to be an engineer. His eldest son goes to the local College. Apart form going to college this son also does a job but his father wants him to concentrate on his studies. His father is proud that his eldest doesn't drink or smoke.

It was good to ask them what I should take to people when I visit Bangladesh. They suggested biscuits and sweets.

Notes from the second visit in March 2000

INTERVIEW with the cousin and C2 (B)'s sister

It was a very hectic time as the family had their extended family around and wanted to get on with eating. The family kept coming in and out of the house and I had to move rooms twice and in the end, ended up on the staircase with C2(B)and his sister for the last fifteen minutes. Everyone was very friendly and relaxed though I did feel awkward trying to discuss ideas when the family was so busy – however, a previous

occasion had already been cancelled due to Ramadan celebrations. The eldest daughter (C2 (B)'s sister) who goes to the local secondary school and used to go to another local secondary school and has met my (the researcher's) daughter was very helpful and considerate. She seemed to be aware of my situation and also able to accept that the family had other agendas to deal with.

The parents seem very confident that their hospitality is a way of life and seemed very open about inviting people in to eat and share time – they invited me and my children to have some delicious food over Ramadan. This type of hospitality is obviously more important to them than answering interview questions!

The cousin has lived in Bangladesh and grew up there. She loves everything about it; the seasons, village life and the fact that it is her country – she misses it. C2 (B) sister loved visiting Bangladesh and understands that the older generation yearn for Bangladesh but says that she is used to living here and doesn't miss it in the same way.

Dhaka is seen as full of new ideas and more westernised. However, the villages are enjoyed because they have more family and relations there; even though they are much poorer in the villages. The westernised side of Dhaka is seen as good for Dhaka and Bangladesh because it makes life easier for foreigners and those who now live in the UK but visit the country to find what they require in terms of western comforts.
C2 (B) sister is aware of Western culture through her contact with school and has nothing against it. However, she finds the Bangladesh culture more important to her because that is the way she will have to live in her life and therefore that is the culture she needs to know about more.

They like the Azan and having lots of shrines around in Bangladesh. They like the idea that 'All is one'. The cousin suggested that although they live in this country they still want to have Bangladesh culture. She finds it hard living in the UK because she doesn't understand the language as well as she would like. She also likes the silence of the times of Azan. She agrees that there is more rushing about in the UK but it also feels safer here as everything is more out of control in Bangladesh. They like to be able to pray five times a day because it makes you feel good; peaceful. Not doing anything but praying to God seems a good thing to do for moments. On Fridays they like to go to the Mosque to pray but there is not always time to do this or to pray five times a day.

When I read the letter from a young woman in Bangladesh they said that, that is how it is and girls are known to have to marry at even fifteen. However, they mentioned that though things are changing now there is no real choice. They found the letter honest and truthful and understand that over here women are more independent even if they are married.

They feel it is the same here. However, that you are not allowed out on your own in Bangladesh but here you can wander about on your own and women. They said that ladies here are more independent and equal. However they feel that your family can be a bit of a problem sometimes because they don't always understand what you feel and sometimes friends can prove to be more understanding. For these two women friends are as important as family.

They said that the education system in Bangladesh is stricter and there is corporal punishment and that you also have to have money to get educated over there.

They suggested that the reason why parents don't go into the schools in the UK, is that they feel shy because they don't speak the language and don't feel they fit. However, in their family THE FATHER is more knowledgeable and articulate. They said that the Bangladesh mothers are seen to be more like housewives and also expected to teach their children about Islam, that women do tend to do more work, especially in the home but that in Bangladesh it is easier for them because they often have servants. However, C2 (B) sister who has lived in the UK all her life did feel awkward about servants when she visited Bangladesh.

The parents do appreciate the education here and believe that it is also part of the enjoyment in their children's lives.

FB3

This family had a son C1(B) who was in the class the researcher worked in and carried out the pupil group interviews in. The family was composed of seven members including the parents.

First visit in October 1999

The family was very welcoming and C1 (B) was very hospitable and friendly. I was given some delicious food and rice.

I told them that that I was working one day a week with C1 (B)'s teacher and also working for my research as well as a job. Also, that I have origins in the Sylhet area; that I have two children at the local secondary school and that my husband died six years ago.

C1 (B) is one of five. He goes the Mosque in the locality every evening and learns Urdu and the Koran. He also speaks Sylheti (or Bangla). His father is a very strict Muslim and his mother is very kind and hospitable. They have their oldest two at a local secondary school (a girl and a boy) and the youngest is still too young to go to Bannerman road. The house is beautiful because though it is small it is full of colour and photos and decorations as well as pictures of Mecca. They come from Sumamgondge, outside Sylhet. All the children love to go to Sylhet but they go there in the summer holidays when it is very hot – so that they don't miss school. The father would like to convert me to Islam. He says God (Allah) explains all the reasons for existence, intelligence, light/dark, modern technology and everything. He says we are on earth for a limited time and have to prepare ourselves. He went to Bangladesh six years ago and doesn't feel inclined to go back although he misses people. They accept that the children here, in the UK, are surrounded by a different culture both outside and at school.

C1 (B) had to translate until his father arrived he did this well and his father told me a lot about the Islamic meaning of life; he is a devout Muslim.

Second visit in March 2000

When I visited C1 (B)'s I was offered delicious food again. C1 (B)'s father talked to me as his mother doesn't speak any English and he emphasised the importance of commitment to Allah and the duty to pray – not for enjoyment though. Enjoyment was seen exist in getting married and having a family. His wife laughed and smiled at the thought of going out to a nightclub – it obviously sounded like a ludicrous idea but at the same time an entertaining thought. The family is expecting their sixth child – it is Allah's wish even though the father finds the play-fighting and noise difficult.

When the father discovered that my husband had died he said that in Islam women are expected to remarry and have more children. He said that women can get divorced and that men can remarry several times. He said that without a husband or wife everything in life is dark.

The father didn't go to Bangladesh last summer and when his family went without him, he called them back after six weeks because he missed them so much. However, it sounded as if they'd had a great time in Sylhet. The father seemed to consider Dhaka to be complicated compared to this locality in the UK. This locality was seen to be somehow less threatening; possibly more like a village. He saw

Dhaka as full of wealthy, poor, good and bad and too many different ways of life. He felt that the behaviour in Dhaka was too corrupt and not good for an Islamic country; it was too westernised. He felt that too much of a mixture is a threat.

He feels that in relation to worship this locality is OK; there is a Mosque and he feels it is not too much of a problem that people in the UK don't understand the importance of Allah. I got the impression that the English were seen as completely different any way and not expected to understand. However, he felt it would be better if there was Azan here as well. He felt that you can pray at home and that the five times are fixed; that there is not a choice about prayer; it is very important and you have to pray and that when you pray; you feel peaceful. You also need to follow the Koran; to order your life. Only Allah is everything; Allah gives water to those who pray.

When I showed The father the letter from a young woman in Bangladesh he couldn't understand what she wanted. He believes that the Koran says that women have first right and that it is important to respect women; he didn't understand why she feels as she does. It is OK for their women to go out shopping (but not to go to a nightclub)! He believes this is a free country and women can do as they want and do, do what they want. They also drink alcohol and this is not allowed in Islam.

They both believed that the education in the UK is much better. He told me that they have private tuition in Bangladesh but it is not necessary here because the educational system is very good here any way. The parents do go to P.T.A's and they find them OK.

FB4

This family was composed of ten family members including parents and older siblings with their own children. The youngest daughter was in the class I studied but did not become part of the pupil group interviews as she went on holiday to Bangladesh when these interviews were taking place.

First visit in November 1999

The mother seemed happy to help me with my research; I was offered tea and biscuits. The third son translated.

I told them that I would return in February (post India) and ask more questions and that I intended to create a very positive picture of their culture and beliefs especially with respect to the importance of the Koran. The mother takes Koranic classes.

The mother has four sons (two are married). I met one who goes to a local secondary school; a married one who had his wife there with him and who also has a daughter at the school the researcher was studying and another seventeen or eighteen year old, who very graciously did the translating for me. The mother has been here fifteen years (they come from Sylhet) and her daughter-in-law has been here eight years. They like to visit Bangladesh but not to live there. I mentioned the other Bangladeshi families I was working with. The mother said that the Bangladesh community centre discourages women from becoming westernised because western values and ways are not compatible with Islam. The children are all bilingual (speak Bengali and English and they can read the Koran and are therefore literate in Arabic too). They told me that when children learn from the Koran, they start with two books that are English translations of the Koran.

I didn't manage to turn up in February and by the time I contacted them in March they had already gone off to Bangladesh and didn't return before the summer holidays; by which time my field-work had finished. However, my experience with the family confirmed my understanding that the extended Bangladeshi family works closely together both locally and across the globe.

FP1

This family had a son C7 (P) in the class researched who was a participant in the Pakistani pupil group interview. The family was composed of eight members including the parent and the eldest daughter's two children.

First visit in October 1999

The Eldest daughter spoke to me because both parents speak little English but they accepted me because a local representative at one of the community centres had spoken to the father. They were intrigued that my siblings and I have Muslim names; they called them Pakistani names.

The eldest daughter will be twenty-two in December and lives down the road with her own children. She looks younger, is good at listening and accepted the focus of my research. The other older children go to the local secondary school where they are grateful that there is Halal meat and that there is a prayer room and place to wash before prayers. Their family observes Ramadan and pray on Fridays, however, the father is the only one who prays five times a day. The eldest daughter mentioned that western people cannot understand the discipline that they achieve. She was interested in talking about their religious customs. Their sitting room is covered in silver and gold framed pictures of Mecca, it was also full of the colour red.

The family comes from the Mirpur Dam area and I promised to bring my book on the Dam on my next visit.

Second visit in March 2000

The eldest daughter explained why the family didn't like the calendar I had sent them from India; they saw it as Sikh and would have preferred a Calendar of Mosques. They did like the postcard though. I got them a copy of the book on the Mirpur Dam – they were fascinated and interested and so I gave them a copy to keep. The mother has a very strong connection with Pakistan and was really pleased to look at the book.

They are not interested in western values and feel they are quite different from their own. The eldest daughter has experienced racism and feels that the main difference and difficulty was to do with colour. She also feels that western culture allows you to do whatever you want and she wouldn't want that. Although she went to the local secondary school and mixed while at school she isn't in touch with any of her school friends any more.

The eldest daughter has the impression that there are lots of poor out in Pakistan and too much hardship. However, she appreciates the hospitality and generosity of the people out there. She said that the education in Pakistan is harder because you have to pay for it there and it is also harder to get work. Here by contrast it is easier to get work and there is also more medical assistance.

Life is different for women because they are always in the house and don't expect to go out of the house. However, she feels that there is more freedom over here which she thinks is all right but isn't particularly enthusiastic about this.

The father prays and goes to the Mosque but she doesn't have time. She says that in UK you have to rush around so much that here is not the time, but that not even in

Pakistan the women have time to pray. On Fridays women go to pray otherwise it is mainly older women who pray. She knows that others say it does give you moments of peace. She is aware that there aren't shrines here but doesn't mind that, she says that people still manage to pray any way.

When I showed The eldest daughter the letter from a young woman in Bangladesh she said that she feels it is the same in Pakistan and that it is still a bit like that here. However, she feels that those circumstances over here where people have jobs, education, food, and there is less poverty makes the situation for women more relaxed.

She understands that there is still the responsibility over here to look after family or relatives who stay. All their friends and family are Pakistani.

The eldest daughter agrees that home life is quite separate from school life. Her brother was interested in finding someone to give him private tuition because he's done his G.C.S.E's and chosen to go to 6th Form College however, he wants to prepare himself over the Easter break. He wants to find someone who can teach him everyday.

The eldest daughter suggested that the reason why parents don't get involved with the school is because of the language problem; they need an Asian person there and there is a feeling that the school will go on any way. She said that if someone did go to represent the family it would be the father who would be expected to go.

FP2

This family had a son who was in year one at the school researched. The father became the P2 interviewee. The family was composed of six people including the grandmother who also lived in the house.

First visit in October 1999

I talked to the grandmother who was very open, gave me tea and let me sit in the room while she did her prayers. I told her that I would not mention names in my report and that I would check with them prior to printing anything for anyone else to read. I also mentioned that I would visit at least another two times.

She told me that she was married at fourteen and had two children by the age of seventeen. She came over to the UK to have her children; she lost two of her children before she came to the UK. She is very enthusiastic about learning English and also speaks Punjabi and Urdu to her grandchildren and children. She lives with her son and daughter-in-law (who is employed at the local sweet shop in the locality). Her daughter lives in Fishponds; a neighbouring area and they meet up once a day for an hour. She prays five times a day (6.30am, 12.30pm, 3.30pm, 4.30pm and at either 6 or 9pm). Prayers last for approximately two to five minutes and are observed facing Mecca. She also reads the Koran. The men are considered to be 80% better off if they pray in the Mosque. She washes before she prays. She drives a car and seems very independent. I think she said that she comes from Kabul and returns there every year. She says that it is the men who have to worry about war and fighting out in Pakistan; women are not involved in the fighting. At the age of five children learn about the Koran and at the age of ten they should have learnt it. At the age of ten girls learn to cook the food as well.

(I saw the grandmother, rather then the mother whom I'd originally arranged to visit and only met her as I was leaving. However she was friendly and said that she would come over to my place for an interview if I wanted her to. I arranged to see her when I return from India).

Second visit in March 2000

(The mother-in-law only answered the first two questions because after that the daughter-in-law "mother" took over as she was more confident with English. The son/husband "P2", joined in at times and was very welcoming and open. They were all very interested in the book on the dam and especially moved by the pictures of the places and religious shrines they could identify with; so I bought them a copy).

The mother had reacted quite agreeably to the calendar. She said that she didn't mind it although she didn't agree with the mention of wine on the back of one of the pictures and she thought this might have been the part that offended the other family? She just said that the rest were just pictures and seemed inoffensive enough but on the other hand she didn't express any enthusiasm for the calendar.

(I asked what the grandmother liked best about Pakistan)

She said that she went back there two years ago – she loves Pakistan because the weather is always hot and you can go outside whereas here you have to stay inside all the time. She says that Pakistan is; 'My country, the people are mine'. Even though she is no longer a local there she feels at home there whatever the locals

think. She likes the idea that the Mosques are near the school and that you don't need a car.

Her family moved to Bradford but they have relations in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan too. Here in Easton they feel there are a lot of Muslims and are glad there are two Mosques.

In Karachi (where the family originate) it has become very modern and westernised, but unfortunately people like to flaunt their materialism, power and wealth. However, here in the locality and the UK there is a feeling that people are more equal.

The mother mentioned how important identity is. Here they feel they are foreigners and their identity is bound up with their cultural traditions. However P2 explained to me the following; they feel it is OK over here now because they have their own community and Pakistani TV, they aren't fanatical anyway and neither are the people in Bangladesh or Pakistan but he says that here, in this country, the Muslims are more fanatical. There is a much bigger community here now then there was twenty years ago. He explained that Muslims come from all walks of life and that the Arab world is their base. He also explained that nowadays youngsters are more involved with their religion but in other parts of the UK there is a kind of fanaticism that is unhealthy. This is because a Professor Hamid Eedat who preached Islam undermined other religions and compared them negatively with Islam.

Although they don't have Azan in the community, they can join in with it on their TV channel. They find the pace of life is different because there are so many things to include in a day. Here when the children finish school, they have to go to the Mosque for two hours and also Islamic classes and this involves the parents as well. The mother prays sometimes but the grandmother prays five times a day. The mother said that when you pray you feel good; you feel really light. At Ramadan they all fast and cleanse themselves to pray five times a day.

When I showed her the letter from the young woman in Bangladesh The mother said that, it is the same story for all Muslim women but it is different over here. Over there men do have all the rights. However, here her twelve-year-old daughter has equal rights to her sons. She wants to drive and be more independent. If she wanted to she could become more educated; she says that it is up to her.

The mother has lived in the UK for twelve years and spent more of her life in Pakistan. She said that my experience of Bangladesh is the same as in Pakistan. Over there every day you go to visit family and relatives. Every day people gather and there is music and the house is full of noise (she said this with great enthusiasm). By contrast here it is like a prison and it's boring because you're inside all day. There you don't sit alone and you never get bored. You can be up all night talking – it is very sociable over in Pakistan. Although her son doesn't speak Punjabi he does understand everything and that is why she wanted to take him to Pakistan.

The family is proud that children are bilingual and could be considered trilingual if you include Urdu. They believe that it is good for the parents to go to school and see how their children are doing however, The mother considers that the reason why they might not go is perhaps because they are shy, don't understand or speak English well enough.

The mother went to school in Pakistan and was taught everything in Urdu, here they learn everything in English. She was also a teacher out in Pakistan and found that the education is very different over here. There the education is stricter and they

used to beat children – something she would never do over here. There, they had one-hour lessons in different subjects and different teachers for the subjects and by contrast she is aware that this only starts at secondary school here. However, what happens there is that the teacher reads from a book and explains the meanings, that the children have to write things down and that there is less discussion.

FP3

This family had son who was in year two at the school studied. The eldest daughter became the P3 interviewee. The family is composed of five people including the parents.

First visit in October 1999

The mother was very accepting of my interest and visit. At first the eldest daughter, said that she felt that they were not representative of the community as they are such a close family and had suffered bereavement (their son/brother died of cancer only last year). However, she relaxed when I told her that every family is unique.

I told them that I was genuine about my respect and interest in other cultures and religions and that I wanted to create a positive portrait of their culture and beliefs.

Their son/brother had died a year ago of cancer. It had been devastating for the family and the mother wanted to show me pictures of him; he was only twenty-six years old when he died and had only been married for two years. His widow lived in the same room as the eldest daughter and they were very close. This eldest daughter works as well as completing a degree in computers at the local university. Her sister is more traditional though she too wants to keep her traditions and culture. The eldest daughter speaks Punjabi and understands Urdu and has always lived in the UK. She has never been to Pakistan but her mother would love to go back to visit. The mother came here at the age of twenty-six; she came from Azad Kashmir. The eldest daughter (P3) went to that school and then to the local secondary, but she doesn't like the area any more. She feels that it lacks status and security. At work she has to wear dark/demure colours and western clothes. She doesn't like to go down the main shopping road because she everyone is too interested in what you wear and what you are doing.

She agreed that her belief had helped her through her bereavement but that she reacted quite differently to her brother's death compared to the rest of the family. In some ways it made her question her belief.

Second visit in March 2000

I gave them a copy of the book as well because they were so interested in it; especially the mother. They had a copy of the calendar up but without the pictures. P3 said that she liked the pictures but that in the sitting room which is also a room of prayer they can't have any pictures up, not pictures of humans and they would have to turn the pictures around when they pray.

I discovered that the eldest daughter is studying soft ware design at the local university. The mother helps at Barton Hill community centre and her daughter-in-law has a child-care qualification

P3 wears western clothes for work but feels that some can be too revealing. She was unhappy about an advert that Miss World (Miss India) did for Coco Cola because she was too exposed. She also found it offensive that an Asian girl was prepared to take her top off for £50. She knows that people drink alcohol behind doors.

When she was younger she would have preferred to live in a more Islamic country but not now, she finds that Islamic people can pester you.

P3 believes but doesn't pray regularly. She did pray when her brother died and also does during Ramadan. She rushes around too much to pray. There is a prayer (Namas) room for men to pray at the local university. There is also a women's room there. She would be interested in learning more about the Koran and exploring its meanings, she would like to know more about Judaism and when she is older she would like to know more but at the moment she is more interested in her career. She would do Namas because Allah tells us that it will help us in our next life. She would do it mainly out of a sense of devotion and did so especially after her brother died; then she turned to Islam. Her mother says that it makes her feel peaceful inside. However, the eldest daughter is too busy to pray at the moment.

When I showed her the letter from a young Bangladeshi woman she said that it is not true of ... though a few families here are very strict. She knows of one family where a young girl was found to have a boyfriend and was sent off to Pakistan to get married. The girl now has two children. She wants to work for herself and wouldn't want to have to go to her future husband for money. She is aware that some girls do get pregnant and the family tries to hush everything up. She also knows that there are husbands who don't let their wives out of the house. She knows of a lovely young woman who has come over from Pakistan and whose husband had many affairs before he married her.

She says that among Pakistanis there is a definite commitment to the family. The eldest daughter understands that it is quite different from the way English people relate to their families. She knows of English families that just meet up for a day over Christmas and still manage to get angry with each other during this brief time. Her sister-in-law who lived in Pakistan says that being here is a bit like being in a prison compared to being in Pakistan. In Pakistan you can move around from house to house more. Over here you have to always tell someone where you are going because the society outside is more alien. She is happy to share space and is also independent. She shares her room with her sister-in-law and she likes to talk a lot with her. She knows English people Have a different attitude and aren't so tolerant. Her mother is quite old fashioned and finds the English language a problem.

P3 believes that Pakistanis in the UK today have to create new identities for themselves and know what they want to do.

P3 believes that shift-work and night-work and the English language creates problems for parents to get to school sessions. However, her parents were responsible about teaching them about not only the Koran and Punjabi but also helping with Maths. She knows there is a lot of pressure in the community to learn about the Koran; however, that there is also pressure to do well at school work, that children are expected to get on with it on their own and to go to older siblings to get help. The eldest daughter says that going to school really helped her little brother to socialise because he was a very shy little boy before.

FS1

This family has two children in the school researched but neither are the year six class. The family is composed of six people including the parents. They are related to FS2 family and therefore also to the S2 interviewee.

First visit in October 1999

The mother and her husband were very relaxed and welcoming. The mother was curious about the purpose of my research and her husband was generally open to discussion. I told them that I was interested in promoting their beliefs and values to policy-makers.

They have four children. They have a video on Sikhism. The father has lived in the locality all his life and went to the local secondary school, which he said was racist in his days. His brother is one of the social workers I saw originally. He is organising a large meeting for the family in Wales – they will all get together and celebrate their culture and traditions. (I gathered later from S2 that the meeting was just for the men). The mother has been in the UK for the last twelve or thirteen years. The mother's family comes from Jullunder and most still live there. They allow women and children to wear western clothes until they get married and get older then they prefer them to wear shalwar kameez. They feel that Afrikan -Caribbeans are getting too westernised, even going to church with English people and loosing their identity and culture. They go to the smaller Gurdwara in a nearby locality. They feel it is important to be quite strict rather then too lax because otherwise they could loose the structure and meanings behind their identity. They feel they are not as strict as Muslims.

Second visit in March 2000

The mother lived in India in Ambala Shona outside Delhi until the age of fourteen. She is the eldest and was given quite special treatment. She found it a shock coming to London; she missed all her relatives and friends and cried a lot. In India she had felt that there was more time and that life was more relaxing. Her relatives in London teased her about not speaking English; her aunt and uncle were very strict but her sister-in-law helped her to learn English. She found going out to work helped and her husband encouraged her to go to college. Here she likes working because it takes her out of the house and allows her to mix with others and have a break from housework.

In India life is more comfortable and not so rushed. When she first arrived in the UK her aunt was very strict with her but the mother realises that she loves her now.

She does find there is a big difference between this locality and London. She says that in London Sikhs mix with other groups more and appear to feel more self conscious about being Sikh. In London there is also more rushing about and making money. Here in this city the community is more close-knit and once you are married life is fairly dead; you just have to stay in with the family. There is a fear about youngsters interacting with others especially after school and before they get married in case they might learn bad ways. However, she feels there is a difference between the generations and she doesn't see the west as a threat.

She feels that here in schools children swear and the atmosphere is too relaxed. In India the schools were a lot stricter and she feels that children should be more respectful to their teachers because the teachers are giving them a future. She finds

that the children are always complaining, demanding and intolerant. As a child she didn't argue and she feels that children have and easier life now; she always tries to listen to what they say.

She told me that as a Sikh in India you wash five times a day and it is easier to do these things because you all do it together. In India Sikhs get up at 4.00 am to pray and you can't do that here as well as look after the children on your own. She feels that here in the UK there is too much rushing about. She considers that rituals create an order in life. The mother believes that the act of belief is good for society and helps to set goals and ideals. She doesn't have time to pray much because she has a little baby but she puts on the prayer tape while she works. She finds that prayer makes her feel good in her heart and peaceful. She says it also helps to make your mind peaceful and to concentrate. She says that if she doesn't go to church she could feel like killing someone! (She laughed after she said this). She says that she does need these peaceful moments of prayer. Her own children are not interested in the Sikh religion though she has a video to play for them just in case they show some interest.

The mother believes that it is also a closed society in this city and London and therefore similar to the situation in the letter. Men tend not to do anything and women do everything. However, she feels that the situation is subtler in the UK and also in London boys become more educated. Also in India it is easier because relations help out. She does find though that her own girls are more supportive then her boys. In her own situation things are a bit different because she found going out to work helped and her husband encouraged her to go to college. Here she likes working because it takes her out of the house and allows her to mix with others and have a break from housework. Otherwise The mother always stays at home minding the children when she is not working and the parties that they have are always just with their family. However, she finds that preparing the parties over here takes too much hard work. In India people come and go out of the house more and help with arrangements. However, there are also more restrictions over there.

She is happy that school is the opportunity for children to meet each other but feels that the concern is between leaving school and getting a job because during that time young people mix on the street and sometimes get led astray. However, this is more of a concern for the girls; boys can do almost whatever they like.

She works at the school and overall has a great deal of responsibility; her husband is ill and she has four small children. She says life gives her a lot of responsibilities these days. She doesn't find time to go out partly because they don't have a baby-sitter.

She tries to teach her children about Sikhism but they don't always want to know; they can switch off and she feels guilty about lecturing to them. She can remember what it was like when her parents lectured to her and she feels self-conscious about doing the same to her parents. She will allow her own daughters some decisions and play by ear about what she will allow them to do. If they are good they will have more opportunity to do what they want and wear western clothes or socialise. But ultimately they will have to marry into another family and so remain respectable. She has adapted to her children's expectations of choice and their many demands e.g. always asking for crisps and answering back and she doesn't like the rude language children can use at school. In India the schools were much stricter and children respected their elders and teachers.

FS2

This family was related to the FS1 family. This family has one son in the school studied he is not in the top half of the school and was not interviewed. The family is composed of our people including the parents. However the mother became the S2 interviewee.

First visit in October 1999

S2 was very friendly and trusting right from the start. She is a very good listener and drew me out about my own background. I told her that I will not quote anything until I have checked if it is OK first.

S2 comes from Ipswich (East Anglia), from a small Sikh community there. Her husband comes from this locality and she has never been to India but became enthusiastic recently since her sister-in-law went there. Her husband went there for three months at the age of fifteen. They have two sons. They go to the smaller Gurdwara in a nearby locality. She understands that they are quite relaxed about their faith compared to Muslims. Their children speak little Punjabi but her husband doesn't unless under pressure to. She is related to the mother in FS1. The grandmother reads the Guru Gransab at home and they don't get to the Gurdwara as often as they would like to because her husband works night shifts, but when she passes her driving test she cane change this situation and take them there more often. His family comes from a place near Potwaller – South East of Amritsar. Her sister-in-law has been to Delhi and she said that she would be interested in seeing photographs of Delhi too.

Second visit in March 2000

The ideas that S2 likes most about India are the religion, visiting the Temples and the fact that the older generation lives out there; she would like to see them. They live in Delhi, her father was born there and lived there until the age of nine. Her family comes originally from Ludhiana in the Punjab and she would like to go there too. S2 likes the idea of being surrounded by religion; she would find that relaxing.

She said that some Sikh women wear western clothes but that her family likes to stick to traditions as they feel it is a threat to their culture not to wear traditional clothes. However, S2 feels strongly that what's inside is more important and at the same time realises that it also depends on what your in-laws think. It is not for here to decide whether she wants to wear western clothes; it is for her in-laws to decide. She does have the opportunity to study and at present is doing a course in reflexology and would like to become a beautician. However, she feels it is a gradual process and that first you have to build up confidence and then slowly go outwards. She does feel that this her home and that they can maintain their way of life here; she wouldn't want to live in the Punjab.

S2 said that by contrast to their religion, Muslims have to pray five times a day and some schools do accommodate their religion. She does feel that by comparison to Ipswich, where she was brought up, there are of Asians and Asian groups in .... She much prefers living here in this locality where it is easier to be a Sikh and observe their customs and traditions.

(I Asked S2 if she could tell me in what way she feels that she lives differently from people in the wider society?). She said that she feels that English customs are different; that the English are not family-orientated, in some ways they are more relaxed because they don't have to take on the family responsibility. However, she

also feels this gives her an impression that they are more irresponsible – she has gathered these ideas from watching TV and when she is out of the house. Obviously she realises that the English dress differently. However, she realises that some Sikhs have become westernised to the extent of wearing western clothes and not being family orientated.

She prefers a more ordered and structured existence and believes that this does make life more peaceful. She is happy with a strict religion, particular dress, manners, linking with her in-laws and generally including her whole family and not just her husband in her life. S2 does feel that life outside is hectic and that there is lots of rushing about. However, she realises that prayer is more enforced in India and wouldn't this to be the case here. She likes to have the option of going to Punjabi classes.

S2 does feel that prayer makes you feel more peaceful as well as more aware of other people's problems. She says it makes you aware that your little complaints are petty by comparison to other people's problems. She plays the tape of prayers for a while and it makes her feel ready to get up and go and also feel good. However, nowadays she doesn't feel she has the time. She is glad that her mother-in-law has a prayer room in her house and that her brother-in-law prays from the Guru Gransab and they join in when they visit. She is also pleased that her two young boys like to join in and also that they like the tapes. Her eldest, who is about seven or eight enjoys saying his prayers and taking part. She says that her children also like the prasad (temple food) afterwards, the afternoon in the Lunga in the Gurdwara and the fact that the family gathers together once a month. S2 is also glad that the school takes part in ceremonies.

When I showed S2 the letter from the young woman in Bangladesh she agreed that women don't get their full independence and that their freedom is still limited compared to the situation for western women. However, she says that a lot depends on your in-laws. She is supposed to live with them but they accept that she doesn't.

She said that if people visit or stay they become part of the family. However if they wanted to be on their own that would be fine; however, it would be rude to leave them and not go out with them unless you knew that they preferred to be on their own. By contrast she understands that in an English family that visitors, whether family or friends would be generally be expected to go to a bed and breakfast. She understands that English feel could feel that they are imposing themselves or are being imposed upon. She understands that the feeling and expectation of space is different.

S2 is glad that the school celebrates Diwali and feels that it makes the celebration feels more normal. In Ipswich she was sent to an all-English school and felt shy and embarrassed by her Sikh festivals; on these occasions she felt self-conscious. So by comparison she is pleased with Bannerman road school. However, she sometimes feels that the teachers don't respond to Asian children and sometimes feels as if her child is being a bit neglected. She imagines that Asian parents lack confidence and knowledge of what is required at meetings. She does feel that the school gets the parents quite involved and knows that her sister-in-law takes a big part in the school. She understands that a lot of parents would lack the confidence to become governors.

FS3

This family had a daughter in year three of the school studied but she was not interviewed. The family is composed of four including two parents and the mother became the S3 interviewee.

First visit in October 1999

S3was fine about the interview; she has travelled and lived in other parts of the UK. Her husband, who is a photographer, doesn't like to be slotted in to the term 'black artist' when he went to the local art centre.

I told her that I was interested in moving policy-makers along in terms of their understanding of South Asian population and not the other way round.

Although S3is westernised she doesn't feel ostracised by the community because she is a solicitor. She was brought up in Glasgow, from a large family and all the family members are professionals now. She travelled to India and met her (of Hindu origin) husband in Puri/Orissa while she was there. It wasn't an arranged marriage though she was brought up very traditionally and enjoyed going to the Gurdwara. She was enlightened when she went to live in Handsford in Birmingham and while she was studying English at UEA. She never completed her Master's in cultural studies. Her husband is a photographer and brought up their first daughter while she worked but when their second daughter was born they swapped over. Her eldest who goes to Bannerman road does speak a bit of Punjabi.

She understands that the locality is full of Muslims and poor/parochially –minded Asians who were initially low-caste Hindus and became Muslim to avoid caste discrimination. For these Asians gender is a very powerful issue because it's OK to do what you want if you are male but a problem if you are female. She understands that females have to keep the society going for men.

Second visit in March 2000

S3 was brought up as a Sikh but she reacted against the traditional/patriarchal Sikh culture and was exiled from her family (for a while) after she married a Hindu of her own choice. As a child she visited the Punjab twice and went to weddings. However, as an adult she travelled to India avoiding the Punjab. She found that she felt drawn to other elements of her origins as an Indian woman. She was drawn to the Pagan elements, the ideas around the Goddess Kali, nature worship, the erotic temples and also some of the symbolic rites that originate in the female identity such as throwing red dye around which represents menstrual blood. She found that India is a land of deep philosophical ideas and humanism that had originally had a great respect for the female. She felt she belonged to this ancient culture and not to the more recent, decadent as well as patriarchal developments of Indian cultures. She sees both western and eastern cultures as both good and bad but is drawn to the depth of Indian beliefs and values rather then what she sees as more shallow western cultures. She considers the East to offer a greater sense of hospitality and generosity though she has adopted elements from both cultures into her present life. She sees herself as Indian/English rather then English/Indian

She is not interested in the traditional cultural traditions that circulate in Easton because they are too parochial, conservative and conventional.

Although S3 feels that religious practice and beliefs do not signify any certainty of morality she understands that the act of sharing moments of reflection and prayer

with her parents opens a channel of communication and understanding between them. This space is independent of social convention and yet precipitated by the act of sharing this time of prayer. She finds chanting very beautiful and feels that language, music, dancing and nature are embodied in Indian cultures and practices as 'living civilisation'. She feels that India is more advanced than the West because of the depth of its spiritual insight and understanding. She finds that although she doesn't adopt any conventional religious practices or beliefs; that the Temples themselves speak to the human condition and she is deeply moved by India at this level. She feels that to throw out the strength of this spiritual meaning, as the west may appear to have done, is like throwing the baby out with the bath water.

In it's conventional sense S3has no time for religion; she has no time for the dogmatic interpretations of the Guru Gransab, the Bible or the Koran. However, she likes to listen to the teachings because she finds them quite calming just to listen to. She considers that the local beliefs and practices are controlled by a sort of local Mafioso and prefers the idea of prayer at a personal level.

S3 sees prayer as a natural state and considers that the state that plants exist in is also like a state of prayer.

When I read S3the letter from the Bangladeshi young woman she said that she believes this is the how things are at their worst. She says that as a teenager she felt like this. She recognises that in this type of Eastern culture women don't look after each other's needs because mothers are complicit in the denial of what is really going on; the family always accepts pressure from mother-in laws. She considers that both boys and girls feel like rebelling and that she knows of many single girls who have gone to live in America and don't tell their parents about their lifestyles. She understands that in India the women are in fact the guardians of these cultures and that within an Indian context the situation is different. However, she feels that on a positive level it is different because there is an expectation that everyone can go, 'walk about', on pilgrimages to visit shrines and to use Temples as resting points. However, she understands that there is a serious lack of knowledge about how to deal with women who are discovered to be prostitutes. While she was out in India the women came to her to ask how they should deal with this type of woman and she had to tell them that punishment through violence or death was not an option. There is now a growing awareness that attitudes to women will have to change.

However, she recognises that in her own set up she takes on the responsibility of educating her children into any belief or other language as her husband never speaks Hindi to their children and feels no responsibility about any religious education. They have decided to ignore the in-laws as well.

S3does feel that like Caribbean people Indians are warmer, more hospitable and sociable than the English. However, she has known some very hospitable English people and would not necessarily want to live in a close Indian extended family situation all the time. She feels the difference between Westerners and Easterners is the different expectation of space and expression of emotion. Indian customs do not leave space for ambivalence.

S3 understands that a lot of the parents living in the locality didn't go to school themselves or speak any English. However, that this younger generation are much more active and aware of the difference between their parents' ignorance and the school's expectations. She understands that the children can feel embarrassed by their parents and she herself felt that school was her sanctuary; a place where she could get a way from her parents, have other values and express other behaviour.

She understands that there is a very painful conflict between the traditional values of certain families and the needs of their children. As a consequence children want to exclude their parents from their world.

However, despite her own rebellion against her parents she has returned to a reassuring relationship with them. None the less, this was more on her terms; after she had understood her life through her education and her own experience.

FS4

This family is composed of six members including the parents. Their eldest daughter is in year four at the school studied and became C12 (S) in the pupil group interviews.

First visit in October 1999

The mother indicated that she had a real interest in my research; she was kind and generous and I left with a bag of bakora. I agreed to give her some driving practice to show my support as she seems to have her hands full.

I told her that I was very interested in her lifestyle and that I have two children myself; that I have always lived in the UK and have no knowledge of Indian cultures and languages.

The mother is one of eight children and is close to her family in Manchester but not to her in-laws here in this city. She has four children, three daughters of three, seven, and eight years and a son of about five years. While I was there her husband was asleep upstairs; he is unemployed. She wanted me to come back another time. She lent me a book about her Guru. When she was younger she didn't go to school much and her father was very strict. The house is full of pictures of the Sikh gurus and she wears Shalwar Kameez all the time. She and her children speak Punjabi and go to the Gurdwara – the smaller one in a nearby locality. She wanted to tell me about her love affair with a Sikh boy who she grew up with and who lived two doors away from her family in Lancashire. Apparently he is a pilot now though not happily married. She had wanted to marry him but not been allowed. She had tried to leave her husband once but when she went to stay with her family in Manchester they just expected her ultimately to return to her husband. She said that they don't expect people to break up.

Second visit in March 2000

I sometimes help the mother with driving practice and on these occasions have become aware that I am very stuck to my own sense of organisation and strict time keeping. On occasions the mother has wanted to use this opportunity to pick things up from friends or the shops. On one occasion I was irritated by this detour and said that I would put the 'L' plates on the car while she went and did her shopping. However, she said that she couldn't go to the shops on her own. I felt very ignorant when she explained that she might be seen in the shop on her own and that someone might mention this to her husband and that she might get into trouble. It seems that, as the local high street is full of Asian shops it is also a parading ground; that people are also checking up on each other there.

Before the interview when I was chatting to the mother, she mentioned how she would like to have another a boy and would try for one (even though she has four children already – three girls and one boy).

She loved the photos of the Golden Temple and I gave her two and her husband was very pleased too. Her husband seems to now accept me coming into the house and went into the other room to listen to Indian pop music. The mother would like to sing and would have liked to have become a singer; she likes to sing from Hindi movies. She was also very impressed that a white friend of hers has learnt Punjabi from a book that she has now lent me!

The mother likes MacDonald's and the shops in town but doesn't get the opportunity to go there often. She doesn't feel that the way people behave in the wider society is that bad. She would like to go to India and feels that the children would like it. However, her family live here in Manchester and so she wouldn't want to live in India. She agrees that religion means a lot to her people. She says that her husband's family is a bit strict and that although she would like to wear western clothes that she wouldn't be allowed to.

The mother feels that it would be all right to have more religious customs in the UK but that English people wouldn't like it. The mother feels that religious practice and school are separate. She understands that school is where you learn things and that although you could learn about religion at school you can practice it at home and in the Gurdwaras and that it doesn't have to be in school. However, she knows that there is also teaching in the Gurdwaras and that children can also learn how to read and write there. Her own children don't go because it is too far to the Gurdwara and she imagines that when they are older they might want to go more and also be able to get there more easily. She is still learning how to drive. She does think that it's difficult for her children to learn and speak Punjabi when English is spoken so much and when all the subjects are taught in English.

The mother has the impression that people in India rush around more than over here and that it is more chaotic and dangerous over there because there are not so many signs on the roads etc.

She likes to play her prayer tape for five minutes but there is often too much else to do and she experiences problems just keeping her children and her husband happy any way. However, when she does listen to the tape it does give her a peace in her heart. She believes that if you can pray once a day that it does make you feel better inside. She feels that she's not very religious any more because she hardly ever has time to pray these days; she has too much household business to deal with.

When I read her the letter from the young woman in Bangladesh The mother said that she felt sorry for the woman but says that it is the same being a Sikh. She feels that women shouldn't have to get married that quickly and that it is still hard for some women in families over here in the UK.

If visitors or family members came to stay and expected her to go out with them she would, but she would also be happy to drop them off somewhere if that's what they want. Her mother wouldn't let her go out on her own and she says that she doesn't mind this even now. Once she went to the pub with her husband and she enjoyed this...

When I mentioned the fact that there is more private tuition on the Subcontinent the mother said that her son does see a speech therapist. She also mentioned that she had to change schools as she moved from Lancashire to Manchester. In one school there were more westerners and in another more Asians. She recognises that Asian parents see their responsibility as separate from the school responsibility; that their work is at home.

APPENDIX THREE: THE PUPILS' INTERVIEWS

PREPARATORY GROUP INTERVIEW OF PUPILS

S: I'm of Asian origin myself and I recently went back there. What I'd be really interested in is knowing what you know about your world, your origins and also what you feel about your education and things like that. Alright?

All 3: Yeh.

S: O.K so what I've got ten questions to ask you and if you all want to speak you may have to take it in turns, which might be best- we'll see how we go. So the first question is – I think we will do this one in turns; " What do you like about visiting Bangladesh and Pakistan and if you haven't been there; what do you know about the place and why would you like to go there?

C3 (B): I want to go to Bangladesh because everyone says that it's really fun; all my relatives and cousins have been there but I haven't.

S: So what do they say about it?

C3 (B): There're like really big Mosques with palms and coconuts and this pool where you can swim and you can - if you ask someone to give you a fishing line or fishing net – they will just give it.

S: Alright – so they're very generous (C3 (B): Yes) I found that when I went there as well. And it's very beautiful. Yes do speak C6(P):.

C6 (P): I went there yeh – and –

S: Whereabouts in Pakistan did you go?

C6 (P): Kashmir.

S: I've been to Kashmir.

C6 (P): You could walk anywhere you like- Yeh and no one told you what to do – just go where ever you like.

S: So the feeling of freedom?

C6 (P): Yeh.

S: And where did you go – what places did you go to?

C6 (P): I went to Islamabad.

S: Ah that's a city then.

C6(P):: I went to the Mosque.

S: And what did you enjoy about it? Just going anywhere? Any other things? Did you like any other things about it?

C6 (P): Cousins.

S: All your family. So they were all very friendly and welcoming?

C6 (P): Yes.

S: And what would you like to say C5 (B)?

C5 (B): I was born in Bangladesh.

S: Whereabouts in Bangladesh?

C3 (B): Dhaka or Bangladesh?

S: In a village?

C5 (B): Sylhet.

S: Sylhet – I went to Sylhet.

C5 (B): I really like it cos I hang about with my cousins and I like visiting my friends.

S: So there's a lot of family and friends out there?

C5 (B): Yes.

S: Do you go back there?

C5 (B) I might go this summer.

S: Oh might you! So do you remember anything you did in these places. What sort of things did you do?

C5 (B): I went visiting my mum's cousins and my mum's cousins always told me scary stories.

C3 (B): Yes there's a lot of scary stuff going on in Bangladesh because there are witches but not witches with broomsticks and hats. Like they change their face into somebody beautiful init [isn't it]and they start to cry and somebody has to come up to them and say what's wrong. And the witch starts to chase them.

S: Ah.

C5 (B) And there's...

C3 (B): They wear white saris.

C6 (P): It happens in Pakistan as well as Bangladesh.

C3 (B): There's some mad people as well – I've heard so many scary stories.

C5 (B): I've seen a mad person.

C3 (B): That's the concern in me [that's my concern].

C5 (B): Do you know

C3 (B): (interrupts) But anyway I think it will be fun.

C5 (B): This lady used to live in my mum's house and she died because of what you call it – she was really scared because vampires always come and scare her when she's asleep and she always puts onions around but they still don't work and when she wants to go to the toilet she needs someone so someone goes with her to the toilet.

C6 (P): Miss

S: To protect her.

C6 (P): You know when I go to Pakistan yeh I don't think about ghosts; when I'm in England I think about ghosts.

S: I was going to ask you what's the difference between England and Bangladesh or Pakistan?

C3 (B): Miss do you know that this school was built in 1875?

S: No. I do now.

C3 (B): 1877 – it's Victorian.

S: Ah – you've been studying Victorian schools right and that's a difference.

C3 (B): It's obvious. And once Miss we threw up something up on the ceiling and we saw this pigeon and this really old bird and I think it was trapped there when they were building this and the feather fell down.

S: Is there anything you want to say C6 (P)?

C3 (B): And we saw a room up there and windows with curtains – it's scary.

S: It adds another dimension.

C3 (B): We were trying to so an ouija board in the library. In Eric time we were creeping in the library and we were trying to do ouija board.

S: I don't know if I should know about his. Any way I'd better just focus on this because what happens is that I have to try and write it all up and if there's lots and lots it takes me ages and ages to write down everything. Um the next question is – question 2 is : "Would you like to live in Bangladesh or Pakistan?

C3 (B): Well I don't really mind.

C6 (P): I wouldn't want to live there.

S: Why wouldn't you want to live in Pakistan?

C6 (P): Because of the ghosts.

S: The ghosts?
C3 (B): Yeh that's one of my concerns.

S: That's the reason?

C6 (P): But I'd like to go there.

C3 (B): I'd like to visit places and things like that – it's fun when you go out fishing; enjoy your coconuts and stuffs.

S: It's another world isn't it.

C5 (B): At school you get to go early 'cos in this country you go [home]at three and at Bangladesh you go at one or.

S: You go home then? So you start earlier and then finish earlier as well?

C6 (P): We go at eight o'clock.

S: So do you like living here in ... as well?

All 3: Yeh.

S: But you'd love to go back to Pakistan or Bangladesh regularly or something?

C3 (B): I'm dying to go there because I haven't been there.

S: Well you will I'm sure. Um – and also the other thing I was going to ask you is: "Do you usually go to the Mosque?"

C3 (B): I do everyday except Sunday.

C5 (B): And Friday (C3 (B): Yeh Friday and Sunday).

C6 (P): I go everyday.

S: Do you go everyday even Friday and Sunday! And can you tell me what you do at the Mosque?

C3 (B): Well we- I'm on the Koran. First you get on Hyda which is a small little book where you learn how to spell and then in Sufara to read all the –

C6 (P): Suras.

C3 (B): Yeh Suras and after..

C6 (P): You go on the hard ones and then the Koran. I've finished the Koran twice.

C3 (B): I've finished it once but I'm on second.,

S: So do you...

C3 (B): Every time you – not every time – In the first time when you finish the Koran or Sufara or Hyda you have to give out food – that's what we call Shinli.

C6 (P): Miss some time you have to go and pray every day.

S: Do you like praying?

C6 (P): Yeh.

S: What do you like about praying?

C3 (B): You get to know more *suras* because you read all the suras in the book while you are praying.

C5 (B): Cos you get to go – when you die you get to go to heaven.

C3 (B): Yeh so that means we're praying to go to heaven.

S: So you're preparing yourself?

All 3: Yeh.

C6 (P): It's like tests- like the Shitan making..

C5 (B): Like the Shitan and Allah.

C3 (B): So they've got these competitions. They have a competition to each other – Allah

C6 (P): How much people go to heaven and the *Shitan...*

C3 (B): It depends if they're a good or bad person.

C5 (B): And how much people that he can make going to hell.

C3 (B): The Muslim prophets are called Mohammed ..

C5 (B): *Sulula insulla*

C3 (B): *Sulula insulla* ah.

C5 (B): You know Mohammed ----- you know first we didn't used to be Muslims cos – cos we used to be Hindi people.

M & C6 (P): (emphatically) No – Christians and Jews.

S: Who are you talking about?

C5 (B): And Mohammed -----made us Muslim s and learn us the suras and then we believe in Allah.

C3 (B): He gave us the message about the Koran and all that.

S: Can you remember any difference between what is was like going to the Gurdwara– the Mosque I mean and going to the Gurdwara – I mean Mosque compared to going to ones here?

C6 (P): No difference.

S: It's the same?

C6 (P): But they're bigger and better.

C3 (B): Miss do you know we can't kill spiders because the spider ..

C5 (B): Allah made them.

C3 (B): Yeh and
C6 (P): To protect Mohammed -------

C3 (B): And they saved our prophet's wife.

S: Ah the prophet's wife – ah well same thing. How did they save them?

C3 (B): They built – um . there were some Christians and they were chasing Mohammed --- or his wife and then he was hiding somewhere and he saw a spider and it *(pauses)*

S: Wove a web around him- like a hideout?

C3 (B): So they used hard webs so that the Christians couldn't like push the ..

S: Ah I see so it was like a barricade?

C3 (B): Yes.

C6 (P): Miss you know cats yeh – they're related to Mohammed --- cos..

C5 (B): You know cats they read – they do prayer – do you know how – they lick their paws and that's called osu – you have to clean yourself and they do that and they do prayer.

S: Brilliant. So you learn a lot don't you.

C3 (B): You know black cats they're lucky for us.

S: I've got a black cat!

C3 (B): Wwwwhoo!

C5 (B): And Mohammed --- don't like black dogs cos they howl and that.

C6 (P): The Shitan made them.

C5 (B) yeh the shitan made them.

C3 (B): Miss are you Muslim or Hindu?

S: In my family you've got all the religions but-

C6 (P): Muslim?

S: But my dad's side was Muslim but he's dead now.

C5 (B): And your mum's side?

S: Were actually Hindus.

C5 (B): Ah half Hindu and half Muslim.

S: Yes but my grandmother, my mother's mother was Catholic – so that's very complicated. Any way she was Austrian/Italian – she wasn't from Asia like the rest of me. Now if you had to tell a pupil who was coming to this school – who came from Pakistan or Bangladesh – what would you exlain to them? How would you describe what the school is like?

C5 (B): I'd say in my language how it is and I'd say don't be scared; don't be shy.

C3 (B): And we, I have (how do you say sasa in um- asks E who says 'uncle') – uncle coming from Bangladesh to here but he didn't know really anything about this place and I had to explain to him.

S: What sort of things did you explain?

C3 (B): I said; you have to learn how to cross the road because in Bangladesh there ain't roads.

S: Chaos isn't it – on the roads?

C3 (B): Yeh and then he learnt.

S: The system of how to use the place.

C3 (B): And in Bangladesh there are film posters of actresses and actors and I had to explain to him that there ain't any here because-

S: You can't expect to see them?

C3 (B): Because this is like English people and Hindi – whatever...

S: And other people.

C5 (B): Every type of religion.

S: So what do you think about describing the school C6P- how would you describe the school to people who are going to come?

C3 (B): In Bangladesh there ain't no dinner times.

S: As far as you know.

M&C5 (B): Yeh.

C3 (B): He came and ...

C6 (P): But sometimes you get biscuits.

C3 (B): And then I told him that – Yeh – I told him that we have to go to school at nine o'clock and eat at twelve- quarter past twelve or whatever. And then get back home at three o'clock – but they come back at ...

C5 (B): Eleven.

S: So what would you tell them about what it was like at school apart from what you – meal times.

C6 (P): It's a lot easier than Pakistan.

C5 (B): Cos Pakistan they have to read Urdu.

C6 (P): Cos we have less time than here.

S: They have less time at school?

C5 (B): Plus they don't have play times and when they come in the morning and when the teacher's not here; they just play and the teacher says to come back to the classroom and they just come back.

S: Do you get a feeling that it's stricter out there?

C6 (P): Yeh.

C5 (B): Yes the teacher whacks you with a stick; they cane you.

C6 (P): They never used to hit me because I was new.

C3 (B): The teacher never used to hit my mum cos –

S: Did you go to school there? (addressing C6(P):) and how did you find it?

C6 (P): Hard.

C5 (B): I used to get hit all the time cos I was always like talking with my friend and once she hit me on my back and my tooth was wobbling so it came out...

S: That must have been a bit dramatic.

C6 (P): Sometimes they'd read English as well.

C5 (B): Yes sometimes or like..

C6 (P): I was reading ABC that was easy for me.

S: So you must have felt really bright then.

C6 (P): Yeh.

C5 (B): When you go into year six you have to read things like "a cat is going to..."

C6 (P): Yeh.

S: So they have to learn English but you don't ...

C5 (B): Cos they read easier stuff.

S: Don't you learn Urdu here?

C6 (P): No.

S: Do you learn Urdu in the Mosque?

C6 (P): Yes.

C5 (B): I read Bengali – cos we've got this Bengali class.

C6 (P): I read Arabic.

S: Oh great – I was going to learn some Urdu.

C3 (B): When my mum was small she was in Bangladesh and she had this teacher who was very talented and stuff and he never used to whack my mum cos she was very innocent.

S: That's good, so she, so if you behave well you get treated well as well. OK and so here at this school – what do you think makes teachers pleased with you? What sort of things?

C3 (B): Um

C5 (B) Working good.

C6 (P): Not messing about.

C3 (B): Um

C6 (P): Doing the correct things.

C3 (B): Um rules like no bubble gum in the school- Not allowed to run around, not allowed to fight...blah, blah, blah

S: Any other things?

C3 (B): There's so many – it's like if you can't do anything.

S: Ah right so many rules but you seem to behave quite well.

C5 (B): Next Monday they're going to change the rules like detentions.

C3 (B): They're going to have it in the classroom and it depends on how long.

S: Why do you think they are doing that?

C5 (B): Because some people skip – um.

S: Ah I see so they can control it better; they know that people won't be able to leave the classroom and go downstairs.

C3 (B): And plus what was I going to say—the more naughty you are um...

S: More detentions you have?

C3 (B): Yeh the more time you get.

S: OK so what makes your teachers angry then?

C5 (B): Naughty...

C6 (P): Yeh naughty.

C3 (B): Not listening to the rules.

S: So what about in the class – what makes them pleased when you're learning?

C3 (B): When you're doing good work and trying hard and not talking that much

C6 (P): Not messing about.

S: And what about home are there similar things at home or what happens with your – What makes your mum and dad pleased?

C3 (B): Well if you help them.

S: Ah so they like to be helped.

All 3: Yeh.

S: Any other things that makes them really pleased or...?

C3 (B): Um...

C6 (P): Doing stuff.

C3 (B): Um I don't know...

C5 (B) When it was mother's day I gave my mum like...

C3 (B): A card...

C5 (B): A card and a gift like chocolate bar and she was really pleased.

S: I bet she was.

C3 (B): Yeh that's what I do all the time. On mother's day I give..

S: And what makes them really angry?

C3 (B): And my dad – I give a card to my mum and my dad goes why don't you give me one!?

(S laughs)

C6 (P): If I swear.

S: If you swear they don't like you?

C6 (P): Yeh.

S: Also they expect you to go to the Mosque don't they – but that's not a problem – you seemed to like going there anyway?

C3 (B): Yeh but we have to like it there.

C5 (B): Some people don't like it cos they get whacked and don't like going.

C3 (B): My teacher doesn't whack us, she tells us off. But I think they used to.

S: So it's changed – they're a bit more lenient now?

C5 (B): But do you know the teacher we have now – I don't like the teacher – you know the girls' teacher – the one they have- I don't like that teacher she takes like more ????and things like that. I like the other teacher cos she's going to come back anyway from Bangladesh.

C3 (B): You should never see girls praying.

S: On yes that's right. You have separate areas don't you.

C3 (B): And girls should never see boys praying. In my Mosque all the boys go upstairs where the boys pray and downstairs all the girls pray.

S: Do you all go to the Mosques?

C3 (B): Yeh, me and C5(B): go to the same Mosque.

S: Right.

C6 (P): I go to ...Mosque.

C3 (B): Yeh I've seen that in ... road.

S: Could you go into it if you wanted to?

All 3: Yeh.

C3 (B): Any Mosque on ...

S: Good. So basically do you think there are any links between what you do at school and what you do at home or even in the Mosque?

C3 (B): Hah?

S: Are there any links – is there anything similar about what you do at school and what you do at the Mosque?

C5 (B): You know in this country teachers they're not that cruel or anything like that; they're kind of kinder-

C6 (P): They don't hit you.
C5 (B): And at the Mosque they hit you.

C5 (B): They explain to you don't be naughty and that's what I like.

C6 (P): But in the Mosque you get hit.

C5 (B): Yeh.

S: But in the home – is it like in the school?

C3 (B): No not really because my mum doesn't tell me like don't chew bubble gum; don't run around because it is my home!

S: So it's a bit relaxed.

C5 (B): My mum says don't squash the settee yeh (S laughs) and she says don't eat dinner in the living room.

S: Ah yeh I do that as well – I don't like my children eating in front of the television (S laughs).

C3 (B): Oh no I forgot.

S: Sorry.

C3 (B): Oh no it doesn't matter, um..

S: He was saying; "my mum says don't sit on the sofa or rather don't stand on it probably?"

C5 (B): Do you know – when my sister starts on me and hits me and when I hit her back my mum comes in and sees in the end and she doesn't see in the beginning and then I get the blame.

S: Right that's family life isn't it? I hope I don't make that mistake.

C3 (B): That's what my mum does to me. When my brother gets hurt she always tells me off.

S: Are you the eldest?

C3 (B): Yeh.

S: Are you the eldest ? (turning to C5(B):).

C5 (B): Yeh.

S: What about you C6 (P)?

C6 (P): I'm the youngest.

S: So you're the youngest and you don't get into trouble? (S laughing).

C5 (B) to C6 (P): Who's the eldest of you?

C6 (P) to C5 (B): : My brother.

C5(B): to C6 (P): Which one?

C6 (P) to C5 (B): :The bigger one.

C5(B): to C6 (P): What's his name?

C6 (p) to C5 (B): Sulma.

C5 (B) to C6 (P): Which one?

C3 (B): And plus you don't have to have homework when you're at home and you always have to get homework when you're at school.

S: So you do have work- so do you – um-

C6 (P): You don't have homework in Pakistan or Bangladesh.

S: You don't?

C5 (B) You do sometimes – it's not like work, but we always, my cousins, we always read everyday at home and in the night cos it's better to learn.

S: So you all work together at reading? What about um- are you aware of other families like West Indian families living in different ways; or White families?

C3 (B): Ha?

C5 (B): I don't like people who's [who are] Irish because they live in my area and they come and they're always bullying me for no reason and I don't like them and their dad is really bad; they steal stuff and they're not a really good family.

S: Is that in ...?

C5 (B): Yeh they're in ... and ... is not a good area cos..

C6 (P): Violence.

C5 (B): There's loads of like rules about how Muslim s are like and that stuff. And they beat up – they sometimes kill the Muslim s – the Christians.

S: Really – what in ...?

C6 (P): Sometimes they do.

C5 (B): Yeh in ... road. A woman got killed.

C6 (P): Miss.

C5 (B): Um.

C6 (P): No she never got killed. There's three black men yeh...

C5 (B): They came into the shop.

C3 (B): The woman was sixty-five years old.

C6 (P): And there was a couple of kids there and they were both under five. They got a sledgehammer and whacked her right in the teeth.

S: Just an old woman- was she Indian or Pakistani?

R&C5 (B): Pakistani.

C3 (B): That's Sunika's grandmother and Sunika used to be in this school since year five.

S: That's very scary.

C6 (P): And they put a knife at her mouth and the little kids...

C3 (B): I can remember when we went in ... Park she went past the shop and she told us.

S: But that's unusual isn't it?

C3 (B): There was that time when they put the knife in the throat of a young child. Her sister...

C5 (B): My friend called Abdi – he says that his friend – his friend's mother's friend got raped of this man and she's really worried and so des man des mens., Muslim men; they helped her and they caught him and beat him up.

C6 (P): (in a quieter voice) And they took him to the police?

C5 (B): Hah?

C6 (P): Did they take him to the police?

C5 (B): I don't know.

S: So it's a bit – so you feel there's an anti- Muslim feeling in ...?

C5 (B): Cos you know the police, do you know they police they don't do nuffin'. Police don't care, they don't know what is happening, they blame it on the Muslim s and then they like um- they.,.

S: But doesn't this feel like your home area- cos is there anywhere else that you'd like to live in ...?

C6 (P): A quieter place.

C3 (B): A quieter place.

S: Don't you like the friendliness?

C5 (B) Yeh friendly – more friendly.

C6 (P): I don't have any neighbour 'cept for one friendly one neighbour.

S: I live in ... – which is just across the motorway..

C5 (B): I got a neighbour; she's really kind she gives us flowers loads of time. She's really kind. Because – while she was on holiday – we gave her waste – what do you call it- ...the dustbin men um he cleaned it – because we look after her dustbin – she gave us a flower once.

S: Oh lovely. Where does she come from?

C5 (B): She's English person.

S: Ah that's nice – so some of you get on well even though you're from different places.

C3 (B): In my house; my dad used to have this friend called Martin who was Jamaican or Somalian or something like that and he, every week he used to get us chocolate and his wife used to bring us these presents.

S: Ah so you got spoilt!
C3 (B): My dad was really happy.

(S chuckles)

C3 (B): He got us these containers where you can keep your food all safe and things like that.

S: That's nice so did you keep filling then up with other things?

C3 (B): Yep.

S: Anything else you'd like to say about your life- things about Bangladesh or Pakistan?

C5 (B): I love it, I love it.

S: Do you? (to C6 (P)).

C6 (P): Yeh.

C3 (B): I'm happy to be a Muslim.

R&C5 (B): Me too.

S: And what about being Pakistani or being Bangladeshi; does that feel good as well?

C5 (B) and C6 (P): Yeh.

C5 (B): Even if I was a Christian I'd still like it cos that's my religion and if I was a Hindu I'd still like that cos that's...

C3 (B): Christians – not all Christians – some English people they don't believe in their God.

C6 (P): Some are non- believers.

C3 (B): They should always believe in their God.

S: So you feel you have a very strong faith?

All 3: Yeh.

S: So you like to go and pray and worship?

C5 (B): In Muslim like you've got strict rules like you have to be proper Muslim to go to heaven. In Christian life they could do what ever they want.

C6 (P): You've got to pray five times a day in the Mosque.

S: Yes I know about that.

C3 (B): Plus.

S: And in Bangladesh they have the Azan all the time.

C3 (B): I love the Azan. I can't say it though but you can (pointing to C6 (P) and C5(B)) Cos he's a boy and all the boys have to say it; not the girls.

C5 (B): Once I said it.

C3 (B): I can say it in my head. I can't say it –only in my head.

S: You can't say it?
C3 (B): No.

C5 (B) Once I said it and ...

C3 (B): Him and him – they and all the boys in the Mosque; they can.

S: C6 (P) as well?

C3 (B): Yeh!

C6 (P): I don't do it; I'm not allowed to – I'm too young yet.

S: Don't you- you have to be a certain age?

C3 (B): Yeh but C4 (B) can – he does it in the mike – he goes AHHH and it fills the whole Mosque with ...

S: Do you? (turning to C5 (B)).

C5 (B) Not me – ah

C3 (B): Everyone has to do it.

C5 (B): I don't do it cos I don't know it properly – so – but this boy C4(B) – you know him – he does it everyday and he does it so loudly and cos he's got a big voice and he does it with the mike.

C3 (B): Every time they do the Azan saying; they have to go Ahhhh.

S: And what about you though (looking at C6 (P)) you say that because of your tradition; you can't do it until a certain age?

C6 (P): I don't know; I do know it but I haven't got a big voice.

S: Do you do some singing as well?

C5 (B): No.

C3 (B): Not allowed to sing; never, ever allowed to sing a song with Allah's name in it because umm – I don't know.

C5 (B): Miss do you know a Pakistani – what do you call it – Muslim life and a kind of Bengali Muslim like um it's kind of different. They have the Kourda and second Kawoda and first sifar and second sifara but we don't have that; we have um first sufara...

C3 (B): First sifar and first kayida.

C6 (P): You have that?

C5 (B): (starts reciting).

S: What were you going to say R- one minute (turning to C3(B): and C5 (B)).

C6 (P): Sometimes people say in ...

C6(P)and C5(B): Allah .....(they start to chant and C3(B)joins in).

C3 (B): I've learnt about seventeen or eighteen.

C6 (P): I've learnt my Sura too.

S: So you're all doing really well.

C5 (B): I know Mohammed Sull...song. It goes like this...(He starts to sing and the others join in).

C6 (P): I know that as well.

S: That was really lovely – thank you ...

C3 (B): Every time you eat; you are never allowed to listen to music.

C5 (B): Before eating you have to say...if you don't...

C3 (B): And if you do that than the Shatan who's our – when you're eating..

C5 (B): He comes into your tummy and he eats all the food...

C6 (P): Yeh.

C5 (B): And than you say ; hey I'm still hungry...

S: (laughs)

C6 (P): Miss you know in the morning if you don't wake up; the Shitan he pisses in your mouth.

C5 (B): Ah what did you say?

S: So you really have to wake up!

C3 (B): So if you have to wake up – what time is it?

C6 (P): Four o'clock init.

S: In the morning?

C6 (P): Yeh.

S: For praying?

C6 (P): Yeh.

S: Is that what you do too?

C6 (P): No I don't do it – my mum and dad only do it. They do it every day.

C5 (B): D'you know ; I know this story about this fat man and Mohammed---said take this food and say Kismala; and he ate it and he said but I'm still hungry and Mohammed--- said you can't eat it no more because everyone has to eat...and that's because you didn't say kismala; that's why you're still hungry.

S: Right – so it's very important to remember to be appreciative – that's great.

C3 (B): There are so many rules in the Muslim religion.

S: Do you think there are more than there are in the school?

All 3: Yeh.

S: (laughs) So you have lots of rules in both worlds that you live in. One set of rules and another set.

C3 (B): There's a school – Islamic..

S: Can I just ask C6 (P)...

C3 (B): OK

C6 (P): Miss you know the Pakistani people; they ain't nice they're Feysti.

S: Why?

C6 (P): They come up to you yeh and they say give me some money and that.

S: Some people- not all of them?

C6 (P): Not all of them.

C5 (B): In Bangladesh there's loads of poor people and they come into your house and say; sometimes they eat food and we give them a little bit of curry and rice and they eat it. And do you know what; they eat for their dinner all the time? Um..

S: Rice?

C5 (B): Rice and sugar.

S: Sugar for energy and rice to fill them up.

C3 (B): There's a school around in ...or somewhere...

C6 (P): In ...

C3 (B): Yeh an Islamic school. In there everyone doesn't swear and they are all friends together.

S: Would you like to go there?

C3 (B): I would go there but ...

S: Where do you think you'll go?

C6 (P): I might go.

C3 (B): The problem is that you have to wake up at six o'clock.

S: Right.

C3 (B): I can't.

C5 (B): I'm a hard sleeper; I wake up at seven.

C6 (P): Miss I've been to Saudi Arabia.

S: Did you! What was it like in Saudi Arabia? Was it with relatives?

C6 (P): Yeh.

C3 (B): That's nice – the Islamic place is called the Kaba.

C6 (P): Karba (C6 (P) corrects C3 (B)).

C3 (B): And inside it's like as...

C6 (P): Square shape.

C3 (B): Square shape. In the ---there's a golden door where somebody opens it and inside they clean up the whole place.

S: That's not Mecca is it?

C6 (P): It's Mouka (pronounces it correctly).

C5 (B): If you go inside – it's really nice and if you look up...

S: Have you been there?

C5 (B): No.

S: You've heard about it?

C5 (B): But you mustn't look up, cos if you look up you go blind.

C6 (P): It's too hot.

S: Ah right – the sun's too bright?

C6 (P): Miss when I went there I...

C3 (B): Everyone prays there.

C6 (P): Miss when I went there and I went out into the airport I couldn't even breathe.

S: Cos it was so hot.

C6 (P): Miss there's a Medina, yeh and it's like heaven ain't it and you're not allowed to swear there.

S: Do you swear normally?

C6 (P): No.

C3 (B): Saudi Arabia is a really religious country because I heard that all the Mullahs; what d'you call them – mullahs – in English (turning to C5 B)) ?

S: Mullahs are like priests.

C3 (B): Yeh all the Mullahs cut off your tongue and hang it up on a stick whenever there's hair sticking out.

S: They're very, very strict.

C3 (B): Yeh it's a really, really religious place.

C6 (P): If you thieve there you can't go to heaven and if you thieve again they chop your hand off.

S: So you like the idea of going there but on the other hand you like to live here where it is a bit more relaxed?

C5 (B): Do you know this place and there's a big stone and inside it the Shitan live and you have to throw stones at it and, and. ..there 's Mohammed ....'s grave; if you go there..

C6 (P): I've been there.

C5 (B): If you go there, you have to go round it seven times.

S: How did you find it when you went there? How did you find it C6 (P) – what was your experience?

C6 (P): Oh it's beautiful.

C5 (B): Yeh and and..

S: And was there a good atmosphere?

C5 (B): Was the Shitan there?

S: One minute let C6 (P) speak a bit.

C6 (P): There's four shitans; there's a small one, two middle shitans and a big shitan.

C5 (B): Inside the stone?

C3 (B): Yeh and I'm going to throw stones at it.

C6 (P): We're not allowed to throw it on Hadj- don't you know?

C3 (B): No.

S: Isn't that a celebration at the end of...

C3 (B): Ah yeh.

S&C3 (B): Eid.

C5 (B): Miss do you know you have to cut your privates.

C6 (P): Yeh

C5 (B): And if you don't you're not a proper Muslim and I had that already when I was a baby.

S: Oh is that circumcised/

C6 (P): Yeh.

C3 (B): If you go then seven articles – what d'you call them/ or something what d'you call -----(mentions them in Bengali to the others who are deep in another conversation in parallel).

(C6 (P): to C5 (B): I haven't had that. C5 (B): you don't have to....

C6 (P): I don't know.

C3 (B): Like seven articles in the gold- you have to sell it. I don't know how to say it in English.

S: Something that you.

C3 (B): Do you understand this – seven bodies...

S: Seven bodies? Do you know? (turning to C5(B) and C6(P)).

C6 (P): Seven pillars.

S: Seven pillars of wisdom?

C6 (P): Yeh.

C3 (B): No seven pillars of gold.

S: Ah right.

C3 (B): If you have um those seven pillars of gold by that time you have to sell it to people cos you're not allowed that much.

S: Do you enjoy being at school as well though? Do you feel that you learn things at school as well?

C3 (B): Yeh that's the place where you have to learn.

S: You sound as if you have to learn at the Mosque as well?

C6 (P): Miss d'you know ..

S: Or which place is more important?

C3 (B): The Mosque is the most important.

C6 (P): Miss in Saudi Arabian schools they let you go free.

S: Well it's free here as well isn't it?

C5 (B): Miss d'you know, they read Saudi – you know like Arabic.

C6 (P): No we read Arabic yeh – dey read Urdu.

C5 (B) Ur?

S: Can you read Urdu; can you speak Urdu?

C6 (P): Yeh.

C3 (B): (recites in Urdu)

S: Can you speak Bengali ?

C3 (B): Yeah – I am Bengali!

C5 (B): I can speak Bengali.

C3 (B): I can speak Hindi.

C6 (P): I can speak Urdu.

C3 (B): I can speak Hindi proper. I watch a lot of Hindi films.

C5 (B): Hindi films that 's the same as me.

S: You have Hindi films at home?

C6 (P): I watch Hindi films.

S: Do you have the Asian television programs on?

C3 (B): Yeh on the TV.

S: Yeh I noticed that whenever I go to people's houses they have it on in the background. And then they have the Azan coming on...

C5 (B): Ah we've got a Pakistani- we've got a digital –so we've got a Pakistani channel and it's Arabic.

C6 (P): No Urdu- do you understand it?

C5 (B): Yeh I understand it a little bit.

C3 (B): In all our, in all our Hayda, sufara and Koran there's Arabic writing because Mohammed ---how d'you say it.....(turns to E) Mohammed talks Arabic so we actually read it.

S: Brilliant so you're bilingual really aren't you?

C6 (P): Mohammed--- made Pakistan and Bangladesh. He made it. (emphatically).

S: Ah right.

C5 (B): He's got the power to made it.

S: Mohammed?

C3 (B): That means that he's separated the countries; he broke them ...

C6 (P): Different place...

S: The partition?

C3 (B): Pakistan, India...

C6 (P): It used to be West Pakistan and East Pakistan –we used to be...

S: One part of...

C6 (P): East Pakistan—no West Pakistan and East ...

S: And before that you were part of Bengal?

C3 (B): And there was a fight against Bangladesh and Pakistan.

C5 (B): It used to be India and Pakistan and those together and used to be Hindustani or something...

C6 (P): And Miss you know that Pakistan, India and Bangladesh could have been rich.

S: Yeh if they'd all kept together.

C3 (B): Yeh

C6 (P) and C5 (B): No

C6 (P): But if ...the English people in the Victorian age, they took all the jewels – took it all.

S: All the wealth?

C6 (P): Miss d'you know...

S: But India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are finding their own...

C5 (B): Do you know the Indian King was a Muslim?

C6 (P): I don't know.

S: But even if you know that the English as you say took some of the wealth out of your countries – do you still like living in England though?

C3 (B): Pardon?

S: Do you still like living in this country even though...

All 3: Yeh.

C5 (B): But England's people though they forgot about it though cos they're friends now.

S: You get on with them?

C5 (B): Yeh.

S: With English people?

C3 (B): Yeah.

C5 (B): Cos there's no point, there's no point um fighting about it now, cos it's gone already now...

S: Yes good, good...

C6 (P): Miss India and Pakistan are fighting about Kashmir (sounding earnest and worried).

S: I know all the time, it's hard isn't it.

C5 (B): Why are they fighting over Kashmir?

C6 (P): Where I live.

S: Because it's a very rich part of the country and it's never been clear who actually owns it – so there's always a fight going on about trying to clarify that.

C5 (B): And there used to be a war about Pakistan and Bangladesh and um my uncle was part of it...

C6 (P): He what?

C5 (B): Cos he was the clever one and he was like good at fighting; so he joined up the army...

C6 (P): Who?

C5 (B): My uncle.

C3 (B): Your uncle – call him sasa or mama?

C5 (B): I call him sasa – he's my dad's dad- I mean my dad's brother.

S: So it's exciting because you have a whole history and culture..

C6 (P): Pakistan and Bangladesh are...

S: It's very interesting...So is there anything else you would like to say?

C6 (P): Miss d'you know Saudi Arabia they had wars yeh but now they're not gonna have it because um because..

C5 (B): We're all Muslim brothers.

C6 (P): The Kaba – they're not allowed to have wars any more.

S: So they've actually got a law against wars now?

C5 (B): And any way you're not supposed to have a fight against a Muslim and a Muslim cos we're all Muslim brothers.

C3 (B): Miss I forgot to tell you there's this monster..what d'you call him?

C5 (B): Shitan.

C3 (B): No, no a monster – yeh we'll call him Shitan; if you say you wanta go to heaven he takes you to hell cos—if you tell him to go to hell then you go to heaven.

(Other children rush in).

S: Right we'll stop it now –because I think they're coming in for another lesson. But thank you very much – that was very helpful.

THE END

BANGLADESHI PUPILS

S: I am of South Asian origin myself as you probably know and I did go to Bangladesh. What I wanted to know was – to ask you about your own background and culture and also to find out about your understanding of your education as well. Is that alright?

All 3: Yeh.

S: You can all answer the first question individually and then after that as you feel you want. So my first question is, ' What do you like about visiting Bangladesh. If you haven't been there what do you know about the place; would you like to go and why? OK C1 (B) I'll ask you.

C1 (B): Er... I like going there because I can visit all my relatives and er...

S: What did you like about being there when..

C1 (B): Just my own country.

S: OK nothing – anything you'd want to describe about it?

C4 (B): And you can walk around with your bare feet and play cricket and football and eat good food and hot spices.

S: So you've all been back there?

All 3: Yeh

C1 (B): Especially like the restaurant food that's nice.

C2 (B): And in the morning you can have a bathe in the swimming pools. You have to have a bath every day.

S: Yes.

C1 (B): And everything's cheaper.

S: So you like going back there?

All 3: Yeh.

C2 (B): And seeing all the relatives I've seen before. Plus when I went to Bangladesh I saw my mum's uncle's wife who died after we came back.

S: So you were glad you'd seen her.

C2 (B): Yeh and another one died. My uncle's wife she died as well.

C1 (B): You know Sabia – you know after I came back, after one month my granddad died. And when I went this year it was my auntie's wedding.

S: Ah right so you went to a wedding out there?

C1 (B): Yes.

S: Great. Would you want to live out there?

All 3: No.

S: Why not?

C1 (B): It's too hot and

C2 (B): You have to work a lot.

C4 (B): And you get lots of diseases.

S: Right so you like living here in ...?

All 3: Yeh - it's alright.

C1 (B): It's a bit rough.

C2 (B): Yeh.

S: OK. Can you explain to me what happens in the Mosque?

C4 (B): First you go there and you do your wudu [sacred washing] system for washing, Then after that you go and pick up your Koran, Kyda or Sufara or whatever and then you go to the table or it's like a...

C1 (B): Bench

C4 (B): Bench thing and read it and after a while then you read Namas and then you come back from the Mosque.

C1 (B): And you have to wear something over your head – covering your head.

C2 (B): And the ladies have to wear scarves; you have to cover all your hair.

S: But the others told me that you C4 (B) sometimes – you have to read out or do you sometimes use the mike?

C4 (B): Yes when you go into Azan.

C2 (B): When there's lots of people and you have to do Azan.

S: How do you find that – do you need quite a lot of confidence?

C4 (B): If you know it you just say it.

S: Most of you have learnt Arabic – can you read Arabic?

All 3: Yeh.

C2 (B): We all can. I can't speak it but I can read it.

C1 (B): It's hard to find out the meaning.

S: But you can speak Bengali?

All 3: Yes.

C2 (B): We are Bengali.

S: I know but not everyone can speak it - but then you have to study it – how do you learn Bengali?

C1 (B): I grew up and I was just listening to what people were saying and it just came into my mind.

S: You have Bengali classes – do you go to them then?

All 3: No.

C1 (B): They're boring.

S: OK fine. If somebody came from abroad – like from Bangladesh and you had to explain to them what this school was like. What would you say C1 (B) – in terms of what happens at the school? How would you prepare them?

C1 (B): Um,

C4 (B): I'd say they teach you good stuff.

C1 (B): But it's a bit shattered [broken down].

S: It's a bit – sorry?

C1 (B) and C4 (B): Shattered.

S: What do you...

C1 (B): The school's a bit old and Victorian.

S: OK anything else – what would you say that they teach you?

C4 (B): it's good to know the history of the school.

C2 (B): Like history, geography and English. If they don't know English then they'll teach you. Like ---she came from Somalia and she was taught..

S: Right so they'll help you learn the language if you don't have it. But if you were doing something like an English class C4 (B) – how would you describe what Mrs ...want from you – what does she like you to do?

C4 (B): She likes you to do stories or comprehension, writing or something like that.

S: And what does she give you good marks for?

C2 (B): Punctuation.

C4 (B): Handwriting.

C2 (B): Grammar.

C1 (B): And if it's good...And if it's good work than you can do it on the computer.

C4 (B): Very interesting

S: So if it's interesting that's important?

C1 (B): And if you work hard.

S: And if you work hard thank you C1 (B). And if you were comparing that with what you do when you go to the Mosque? At the Mosque you learn parts of the Koran and you recite parts of the Koran?

C2 (B): Koran, Kyda and sufara for beginners.

S: But if you 're doing the Koran – is it quite different from what you do at school?

All 3: Yeh.

S: In what way is it different?

C1 (B): Oh actually it's quite similar cos you have to read.

C2 (B): Reading.

C4 (B): And learning and if you don't know what a word means than you can ask your teacher.

C2 (B): The Imam.

S: Oh right.

C1 (B): And like my sister, she can like, she can read Koran more fluently then she can read English.

S: She can – how come?

C1 (B): Don't know.

S: Does she work harder at it?

C1 (B): Don't know.

S: Don't know.

C2 (B): It's a gift.

S: So is one more important than the other?

C4 (B): (quietly) Yes.

S: In what ways? Do they have different purposes?

C4 (B): Yeh. If you're a Muslim than you have to do some special things and if you're just like a normal person than you just do what you want.

C2 (B): If you're a non-believer. If you are a believer you go to the Mosque or Church – we read the Koran because when we die Allah's going to ask us questions and some of the questions like the answers will be in the Koran.

C1 (B): if you're a good Muslim than Allah's going to like make you speak.

S: Right so also like in terms of being a pupil here – what are you doing that for?

C1 (B): For good luck.

C2 (B): Good luck in your future.

C1 (B): And money.

C4 (B): Good education.

S: Good education – what do you think is a good education?

C2 (B): If you're going to get a job you need to go to school – go to college.

C1 (B): Your degrees they are reference to get a job and all.

S: You said – C4 (B) – that one was more important than the other. Which one is more important?

C4 (B): Islam.

S: Right. Do you all feel that then?

All 3: Yeh.

S: ...because it prepares you..

C4(B) and C2 (B): to go to heaven.

C1 (B): judgement day.

S: What do you think your teacher here though helps you to understand?

C1 (B): Everything.

A: Not everything.

C1 (B): Understand how to like – how to learn more stuff.

S: What sort of stuff?

C4 (B): Like your history.

C1 (B): And your English - like if you need to write a letter.

C4 (B): Then you need good words.

C1 (B): And good punctuation.

C2 (B): And you need to find out more.

C4 (B): And then you've got to take your SATS tests and you've got to prepare that for that for two terms.

C1 (B): Actually they're equally the same; school work and thingy – because you have to pray and pray to do good in school.

S: So it's all linked up.

C4 (B): But in Bangladesh it's different – like here we just pray in Ramadan but in Bangladesh we pray like every day.

C1 (B): Cos where I live the Mosques just round the corner to us.

C2 (B): Yeh.

S: Cos there're more Mosques there?

All 3: Yeh.

C2 (B): And they've got a mike and they read it out loud.

S: I know like that out there. What about – what is it like to be Bangladeshi then?

C4 (B): It's fine.

S: It's exciting.

C1 (B): Yeh.

S: Why is it exciting?

C2 (B): Cos you meet more people.

C1 (B): And you can speak a different language.

C4 (B): Like me when I first went to Bangladesh I never knew no one and then when I saw - um- after I went up to my cousin's wedding and he was wearing a brown suit and then when he went to collect us from the Sylhet airport he was wearing the same clothes. But I didn't recognise my auntie.

S: Oh right – so there were new people that you hadn't really met but that you are related to?

C2 (B): In Bangladesh in the village where my grandfather lived when I went there I saw loads of other people. I've seen my uncle and the football team and I played with them.

S: Right. When you were saying earlier that it makes you know more people – what did you mean by that?

C2 (B): Like when I went there first I didn't know nobody.

S: So do you mean that having this connection you know more people?

C4 (B): But I know my grandmother and grandfather because they came to England.

C1 (B): Because I like going there because when I first went there I didn't know any body but I met one person that always used to chase me and he could speak. And he was small yeh and he looked weird to me but after a couple of few years when we came back – he was so big – and I thought he was somebody else.

S: Ah right so he seemed to have grown up a lot all of a sudden.

C1 (B): But I was lucky to see my great grandmother.

S: So one of the connections with Bangladesh is with your relatives?

All 3: Yeh.

C1 (B): Miss I saw my great grandmum. If was cos my grandmum always use to sleep in the bed cos she always –and when I ran passed she always used to call to me and she used to talk to me.

C4 (B): Mmmm and tell you stories.

S: So you like to see your grandparents.

C1 (B): Yes they tell you all sorts about what happened to your mum and that and what she was like when she was little.

S: Oh that's great.

C2 (B): Miss when I went to Bangladesh right – they're called the –we saw these thingy band.

C1 (B): Yes these...they come to your house and they start playing music.

C4 (B): Or something.

S: For a religious reason or just?

C2 (B): No just singing.

S: It's a Bangladeshi tradition?

C1 (B): But they are Muslims.

C2 (B): Yeh all my family, we're just .. .my grandma and grandpa were dancing!

S: Sounds lovely – so does this happen regularly out there?

C4 (B): Oh yeh.

C1 (B): Not regularly.

C4 (B): And one time when you have to stay in the Mosque all night it happens – like two times a year.

C2 (B): We're just lucky.

C4 (B): We're just lucky cos I went in the winter time and it happens in the winter so I went there and I was so tired, I had to be there from one o'clock in the early afternoon to three o'clock in the morning the next day.

S: Because I have heard that you work really, really hard. Well I understood that if you work in the evenings and in the day -time that's longer any way.

C4 (B): In Bangladesh you have to read Arabic in the morning at seven o'clock and you read Bengali later on at about eight o'clock.

S: So have you been to the schools out there.

All 3: Yeh.

C2 (B): I went to my mum's old school.

C1 (B): I went to see my mum's teacher the day he died.

S: Oh, right. So what's the difference between a school over there and a school here?

C1 (B): Oh they've got more strict learning.

A: They teach all in one room.

C2 (B): And there are some schools called Madrassa.

C1 (B): Just about English – I mean just about Arabic and Bengali.

C2 (B): I heard that the G.C.S.Es in Bangladesh are harder than in England.

S: What do you mean harder?

C4 (B): They do three subjects – English, Bengali and Arabic and then they have a test on all three of them.

S: Ah right so you've got more languages to learn.

C4 (B): Yeh they finish at the age of fourteen – school.

S: But also in terms of all the hard work you have to do and all the things you have to do: what about your homework? How do you fit it in?

C4 (B): You don't get homework there.

S: No but here?

C4 (B): We don't hardly get homework.

C2 (B): We're only going to get it at secondary.

S: And when you get it at the secondary when do you think you're going to fit it in?

C1 (B): Either after school.

C4 (B): Or in the evening.

S: Yeh it's hard. So basically you have learnt Bengali through your family?

C2 (B): Yeh.

S: Not through going to Bengali classes.

All 3: No.

C4 (B): They only teach you how to read.

S: But when you are with your siblings; when you are with your brothers and sisters what languages do you speak?

All 3: I speak English.

C1 (B): It would seem weird if you speak English to your mum and dad and it feels weird if you talk Bengali to your sisters and brothers.

C4 (B): That's what my dad always shouts – don't speak English to me.

S: When you grow up what are you going to expect your children to speak?

(All 3 in turn): Both, (both , both).

S: You've got to try and keep your Bengali going somehow?

C2 (B): Sometimes I will speak English and sometimes I will speak Bengali.

S: Right so switch and change?

All 3: Yeh.

C4 (B): Only I have a friend yeh and they only speak English to their dad and their mum speaks Bengali.

S: When you go to the Mosque what language do they speak there?
(All 3 in turn): Bengali (Bengali, Bengali).

C2 (B): If there's a Bengali Imam they speak Bengali and if there's a Punjabi they speak Punjabi.

C1 (B): Miss there's some like English Imams and they talk thingy – teach you what you need to learn and that.

S: They talk – what's thingy?

C1 (B): The like teacher – if you're sitting down and you're early they just sit next to you and they talk to you about Islam and things like that.

S: Oh what in Bengali?

C1 (B): Yeh, no in English and Bengali because they're English Imams.

S: So the English Imam he will come and sit and talk to you but the one from Bengal will he do that too?

All 3: Yeh.

S: They come and chat to you.

C4 (B): At the end sometimes they tell you stories and that and then you start dewars (?) and like when you go to the toilet you have to put your left foot first.

S: What sort of stories do they tell you?

C4 (B): About the prophets.

C1 (B): And about the ghosts.

S: Oh the ghosts are in that as well.

C1 (B): Miss there's one Freemason and they're free people – yeh and they've just one eye and they just share one eye...

S: Freemason?

C1 (B): Yeh and they just want to kill all Muslims. And there's one called Nusra Fati khan and he's Muslim and he sang so much that when he died ..

C2 (B): That his tongue is wrapped around his head, all his body..

C1 (B): Then his wife had a dream about that and she asked them to open up his grave and they found his tongue...

C2 (B): Snake's tongue...

C1 (B): Wrapped around his body.

C1 (B): Cos he sung too much.

S: Do you believe that?

C2 (B): I don't...

C1 (B): Yeh I reckon.

C2 (B): This man right in the middle of the Medina – he wasn't a good person right- when people read Namas he didn't read Namas and that's why when he died the snake (?) was...and right away bitting at his head..

C1 (B): Miss...

S: But you know Nusra Fati Khan – he was very popular with people for singing.

(Yeh, yeh)

C2 (B): Indians...(?)

S: So was it a problem that he was singing too much?

All 3: Yeh

C1 (B): About Allah – he sang about Allah as well.

S: Ah I see he sang about Allah but not in the situation you want him to?

C1 (B): Yeh, yeh.

S: So is that what you're saying?

C2 (B): Yeh.

S: OK fine. And if you were looking at your own identity how would you describe yourself?

Umm (they couldn't respond)

C4 (B): Miss I'll tell you a funny story: Once upon a time then a boy came from Bangladesh and he went to school and the teacher asked him 'what have you been doing all day?" and the teacher gives him homework – it's kind of rude – And he goes home and he says what does begin with 'A' and someone says 'fuck off' and 'What does begin with B and he goes—and he goes what is beginning with D and he goes 'superman' [some confusion as M interrupts] And there's his sister and she's listening to the head phones and she goes yeh, yeh , yeh... So right the next day he goes to school and then his teacher says what begins with A and he goes Fuck off and then he [teacher]says I'm going to tell the head teacher and he goes Superman and then he says yeh, yeh ,yeh ..

(All laugh)

C2 (B): I know another right.

S: No I don't think we can spend any more time on these jokes because they are fun but then I've got to write it all down in my diary. So if we could talk about this business about identity it would be very helpful. So um .. for instance – your identity is to do with where you come from and ..

C1 (B): And where you live.

S: And whether you're British as well and also what...

C1 (B): British citizen...

S: You would say you're a British citizen but would you say you were Bengali British or would you say you were British Bengali or how would you put it?

C4 (B): I'd say I was British Bengali.

C2 (B): I'd say I was British Bengali as well.

C1 (B): I'd say I was British Bengali.

C4 (B): If you were born in Britain then you have to be a British citizen.

C1 (B): Yeh. Like C5 (B) he was born in Bangladesh so he's a Bengali citizen. I'm a British citizen.

S: You are British citizens but you also like being Bangladeshi.

All 3: Yeh.

C1 (B): Cos it's a different side of you.

C2 (B): Yesterday Miss did you know Miss my auntie went to Saudi Arabia and next year she's going to Bangladesh.

S: Ah she's lucky.

C2 (B): I'm going to be lucky as well; I'm going to go there as well.

C1 (B): You have to go there once in your life.

S: Yeh. Um are you aware of any families living differently like White or West Indian people – living differently from you – or even Sikhs?

C2 (B): Ah in Bangladesh do you know there's some Hindus as well.

C4 (B): Yes there's some Hindus and that's why the Muslim population is less than in Pakistan – there's about 25% of Hindus.

S: So are you aware of them living differently from you?

A: Ah they're kind of – kind of different – some of them are short and some of them are really tall.

S: But in the way of life?

C2 (B): Yeh in the way of life they're different.

C1 (B): I think about Bosnia and that, like cos they're in the war and they're getting killed and stuff like that.

C4 (B): Ah miss there was a flood in Sylhet.

S: Yes there are often floods aren't there in Sylhet – it's one of those areas of the world.

C1 (B): It's like it's never mixed weather. If it's hot it's really hot – if it's raining it's really raining.

C2 (B): You know about this flood it comes in the summer. Cos normally it's all around, all around the sun and that why it's good.

S: But if you were thinking about other families like around here – like West Indian are you aware of them having a different lifestyle?

C2 (B): Yeh I reckon they do.
C1 (B): There are more Christians.

C1 (B): And they have a different belief.

C4(B)andC1(B): Yeh, yeh.

C4 (B): But they believe in one God like us.

S; So what do you feel about these..

C2 (B): We don't believe that our prophet is ..we don't believe that our God has a son.

C1(B): We don't believe that he has any relatives; he hasn't got a family – he's just one.

S: Do you expect everybody to have a religion?

C1 (B): Yeh.

C2(B): Yeh.

C1 (B): Not all.

C4 (B): Most people do.

M: Some people are non believers.

C1 (B): Don't believe in anything.

S: What do you think about non-believers?

C1 (B): They can do anything they want.

S: Is that alright.

C4 (B): Yeh.

M: But we don't want to believe in anything; we want to believe in Allah.

S: Oh right you like to have your particular ideas...

C2 (B): Yeh.

S: ...Understandings.

C1 (B): Cos like if you're like a Moslem, Allah gives you clues to life. It says in the Koran yeh – always listen to your mum. It's like for example if like you say can you go to football practice to your mum and your mum goes 'no' – like this happened last time. I said can I go to the park and play and thingy..

C4 (B): Cricket.

C1 (B): Cricket and my mum said 'no' and I crept there any way and there was another cricket team there already and the day after a cricket match. My mum said 'yeh I told you always listen to your mum or what you want won't come true.'

C2 (B): You listen to your parents – you get lost yeh and you get kidnapped and your parents won't even know.

C1 (B): Yeh.

S: So it's better to let your parents know what's going on.

C4 (B): Miss d'you know your mum's better than your dad.

S: Ah why's that?

C4 (B): Cos she raised you and she knows what's going to happen.

C1 (B): Cos she's always one step ahead of your dad.

C2 (B) andC4 (B): Yeh.

S: Really.

C1 (B): Yeh.

S: Is that something you understand- through what?

C1 (B): Yeh cos of signs; signs in life.

C4 (B): And it's a secret cos..

C1 (B): She looks after her and she looks after you.

S: Where did you get that idea from?

C1 (B): From the Koran and from life.

C2 (B): Yeh.

C4 (B): And it passes through your generations.

S: And does she teach different things from your father?

C1 (B): Yeh she teaches you stories and er..

M: She teaches you stories, my mum told me stories about being a Moslem; about Islam and all that..

S: And what about your dad –m what does he ..

C2 (B): He does work yeh.

C1 (B): No, no he's like, he tells you like - cos you always have to listen to your dad because like your dad he's stricter and he brings you like ..

C4 (B): All the things you want and ..

C2 (B): Money.

S: But if you're looking at your teacher – um – what d'you think she's most like – like your mother or your father then or is she very different from both of them?

C1 (B): Different.

S: In what way is she different?

C1(B): No actually she's like my mum cos... she teaches you stuff yeh.

S: Any difference between the teacher (turning to the others) and parents?

C4 (B): Only difference is um..

C2 (B): Only she doesn't hit us.

C4 (B): Yeh and things and she 's got a different meaning to us.

S: She's got a different religion – you mean ...?

C4 (B): Yeh, yeh.

C2 (B): Miss , Miss doesn't believe in anything, like she doesn't go to the temple now.

S: No, no but she has a lot of respect for religion which is good.

C2 (B): She respects every religion.

S: That's great. And do you like hearing about other religions cos I heard from the others that you hear about other religions.

C2 (B): Yeh it's alright. We don't mind, it doesn't matter.

C4(B): Some Jews are very religious.

S: So basically what sort of things do you think Mrs ... is pleased with you about in school?

C2 (B): Work, behaviour and things.

C1 (B): Your knowledge.

C2 (B): Your understanding.

C1 (B): Your knowledge about other countries and...

S: OK, right is there anything else because this is all about me trying to understand better about the Asian community and looking at – talking to the parents and the children and the teachers and finding out about what people feel in ... Is there anything that you want to contribute about your culture and background...?

(Pause)

S: Anything you want to say about it...

(long pause).

S: You think you've said everything?

C1 (B): Yeh.

S: So you've said a lot actually; you've said some really interesting things so I'm very grateful to you and it was interesting to hear about your stories as well (S laughs) they will make it more fun to - to um.

C2 (B): Miss did you see the people dancing in Bangladesh?

C1 (B): Miss...

S: No but I heard about all sorts of exciting dances and drama out there.

C1 (B): Yeh and there's a ghost in Bangladesh cos like last time my granny she was walking but she wanted to go to the toilet and she saw a woman; she and all messed up hair , she had her broom and she was sweeping the floor...She was a witch.

C2 (B): Miss do you know there's mermaids in Bangladesh?

C1 (B): Yeh bad mermaids.

S: Bad mermaids – what do the bad mermaids do?

C1 (B): they pull you under water then they...

C2 (B): No when you're swimming like they pull your legs half way and you're going to start drowning and then you've got to kick them off; you've got to kick then hard.

C1 (B): there's a kind of monster at the corner of the swimming pool.

C2 (B): And he just grabs you and pulls you underwater.

S: Do you believe that?

C1 (B): I don't know.

C4 (B): You never know it might be true!

C2 (B): My grandfather he died, miss he died in the swimming pool.

C1 (B): I do believe in ghosts.

THE END

S ...I was unable to get to Pakistan, I didn't have time but I might go another time after I've finished doing my research. And basically what I want to do now is to learn and understand more about your worlds, your ideas and your background. And also about your ideas about your education here. OK, is that alright?

All 3: (politely and quietly) Yes.

S: And you don't have to answer all in one go – you can answer separately. But the first question I'll ask you individually because it's easier to answer that way. So the first question is what do you like about visiting Pakistan and if you haven't been there, what do you know about the place and why would you like to go there? OK I'll start with you A.

C7(P): I like to go there because I meet all my relatives, my great grand mother and grandfather, my grandmother.

S: Great so you've got a huge family there?

C7(P): Yeh but now my grandfather's passed away.

S: Ah did you go to his funeral out there?

C7(P): No my passport was wrong.

S: Oh that's really frustrating isn't it.

C7(P): Yeh

S: OK C8 (P)?

C8(P): I like to go to Pakistan because my relatives are there and it's a free country.

S: A free country?

C8(P): Yeh.

S: What do you mean by that?

C8(P): Roughly you could just go around wherever you want really.

S: So there's a feeling of freedom?

C8(P): Yeh.

S: that's what C6(P) said. Thank you (C9(P) had helped S remember his name). And what about you C9(P)?

C9(P): I like to go to Pakistan because I like to see my relatives.

S: What places did you go to?

C9(P): I went to Sundara (?) ..

S: Did you go to any special places out there?

C7(P): Yeh we went to Shargarso (?).

S: And what's that?

C7(P): It's like a Durbat – like a big Mosque.

S: Oh wow is it bigger then any of the ones here?

C7(P): Yeh much bigger.

S: So what was that like?

C7(P): It was good.

S: So you've all been over there- oh well that's very lucky isn't it!

C9(P): I've been twice.

S: You've been twice C9(P): and what about you? (turning to C8P)).

C8(P): I've been once.

C7(P): I've been twice.

S: And do you think you'll go back?

C8(P): Yes we're going to go back next year – our family is going back next year.

S: Brilliant is that all your family; all the people I've met?

C8(P): Yeh (mentions four names including himself and his dad).

S: Four of you?

C8(P): Yeh.

S: So you'll go round the Mosques again (S turns to the others). Do you visit the Mosques when you go there?

C8 (P) and C7(P): Yeh.

C9(P): We live by a Mosque but that's where men go and where ladies go that's a bit far.

S: Right. What about you (turning to C7(P)) do you go to the Mosque?

C7(P): No not really.

S: So when you're there do you ever go to the schools?

All 3: No not really.

C9(P): I've been with my cousin to her college but to a show there; so I went to see what it was like and it was alright.

S: It was alright?

C9(P): It's bigger than the school.

S: So it is a college isn't it?

C9(P): It is a college and my cousin goes to this college so she took me.

S: So presumably all of you can speak Urdu or Punjabi?

All 3: Yeh.

C7(P): No that much.

S: But enough to be understood when you're out there? Because do people speak English there?

All 3: No.

C8(P): Miss cos you know last time when I was out there I spoke some English and they didn't understand what I was saying.

C7(P): I used to always say English – I never used to say any language over there.

S: What about here though – do you use your language here?

C7(P): Sometimes at home.

S: But mainly English?

C7(P): Yeh.

C9(P): I used to like talk to my sister and go ; 'what do you want?' and they'd help me – they just want me to speak Urdu or Punjabi.

C8(P): At home really I just speak to my brothers and sisters I just speak English. To my father and mother I speak our normal language like we speak in Pakistan.

S: Is that Punjabi?

C8(P): Yeh

S: So you can speak two languages; so you swap and change all the time?

C8(P): I can't really speak that much Punjabi. I speak more Urdu.

S: Urdu?

C8(P): Yeh.

S: And you can read Arabic?

All 3: Yeh.

S: So do you all go to the Mosque?

All 3: Yeh

C9(P): I go every day.

C8(P): We do, me and C7(P) go to the same Mosque.

S: So you go to the one in ...– the main one in ...?

C8 (P)andC7(P): Yeh ... road.

C9(P): I go across the road from that Mosque.

S: Is that because it's for women?

C9(P): Yeh. There's boys on a different section and there's girls on a different section.

S: Do you like going to the Mosque?

All 3: Yeh.

S: Cos you learn your language and learn all the suras?

C8(P): Sometimes if you get it wrong; you get hit.

S: Um I've heard about that.

S: So it's slightly different from school?

All 3: Yeh.

C9(P): You have to learn things by heart as well.

S: Sorry?

C9(P): You have to learn things by heart.

S: By rote?

C9(P): Yeh.

C7(P): I know six suras already.

S: Do you!

C9(P): I know about twenty one.

C8(P): I don't know much. (S laughs sympathetically).

C8(P): But I'm just starting to learn them.

S: Are you enjoying it?

All 3: Yeh.

S: But it's quite hard?

All 3: Yeh.

C8(P): I don't learn them.

S: What do you do then?

C8(P): I just read all the normal actual Arabic ones; not the soota.

S: Ah right – so what's the difference – I'm not sure about that?

C7(P): The soota – you have to learn by heart in the Koran it's right in the back and you have to learn it all by heart- you have to.

C8(P): In the normal Koran you don't have to memorise it by heart.

S: So what do you do then – if you don't have to memorise it by heart how do you learn it?

C8(P): Don't memorise it by heart ; just read it.

S: Just read it out. So you have to show that you can read it basically.

C7(P): Yeh.

S: But not necessarily learn it by heart.

C7(P): When I grow up I'm going to learn the Koran by heart like my grandfather.

C9(P): After I leave school I have to learn it by heart.

C8(P): Every time I used to see C7 (P)'s grandfather outside the Mosque; every single time he used to work there- no not work there – he just used to be there.

S: Who?

C8(P): C7 (P)'s grandfather.

C7(P): He used to open the Mosque one hour before the Namas started and he'd always take us.

S: So do you go in the afternoon, after school?

All 3: Yeh.

S: When you're there you do your prayers but you also learn?

C7(P): Yeah – you don't do your actual prayers like reading Namas cos the time for that is half seven.

S: Ah right.

C8(P): You just stay for two hours at the Mosque.

S: And what do you do in those two hours?

C7(B): Just read.

S: Just read and when they help you to learn – how do they help you to learn? It's quite difficult to learn?

C9(P): They just tell you; go to your place – just get to one page and read one line and just keep saying it and saying it.

S: Memorise it basically? Do you sometimes have someone to help you?

C8(P): You can get – my brother sometimes helps.

C9(P): Yes just at home.

S: So when you're at home if you didn't understand something you can go back to a member of the family?

C7(P): Only hard bits that you have to study.

S: Ah right so you get some back up.

All 3: Yeh.

S: Also one question I was going to ask you which relates to Pakistan was- are the Mosques there different too?

C8(P): They are a lot bigger.

C9(P): Yeah they are different.

C7(P): Like you have your goat – like you know like gurdna – I had a black goat it was named after me.

S: Ah right – but um – would you like to live in Pakistan?

C7(P) andC8(P): Yeh.

S: C9(P):?

C9(P): No.

S: Why wouldn't you want to live there?

C9(P): I don't know if I'd get used to it and my dad has been there quite a lot of times cos he was born there and everything and my brothers are used to it and everyone 's used to it. But I don't think I could and plus I hate it when they cut the goat's throat at Eid.

S: Ah they sacrifice them.

C7(P): But my grandfather's been to Hadj three times.

S: He's lucky.

C8(P): C6(P):'s already been.

C9(P): My granddad's been hadj once and he's going to go next year.

C7(P): Well my granddad used to go to Pakistan so much he's been about eighty odd times cos he used to go every two years.

S: And so why would you like to live there?

C8(P): It's cos it's a free country[the pupils felt they could go out more freely and wander around more in this country than when they were in the UK]. That's what I like about it and it's a really good education there unlike this school we have here; you could get hit with a stick (is it?) if you .....My sister used to always go to school but I didn't.

S: Is that a good education when you get hit?

C8(P): I don't really know – it's not – it's to learn not to mess about.

S: Ah right so they're very strict there.

C9(P): I don't like it cos they just hit you all the time.

C7(P): If you get it wrong then they hit you. They just give you one chance.

S: So what's the difference if you compare what you know about the school out there? I didn't manage to go to Pakistan but I saw some schools in Bangladesh. I know it's not the same but it's similar because it's Muslim. If you want to compare the schools out there and this school here – what would you say are the differences?

C7(P): That school's much stricter – cos Pakistan has got more education and this school hasn't. It's like an educational country.

S: What Pakistan?

C7(P): It's like you have to really get your mind to it.

S: You mean people work hard at it?

C7(P): Yeh.

S: Do you get that feeling C8(P)?

C8(P): Yeh.

S: So what about this school then? If somebody was coming – if you had a friend who was coming from Pakistan and who'd been living in Pakistan and he or she had to come over here- how would you describe this school – what happens in this school to them? C9(P): what would you say?

C9(P): I'd say it's not really that strict.

C8(P): It's not strict at all actually. You will obviously get a detention.

C7(P): Or they might phone your parents at home. They won't hit you.

S: And what other things might you say to the person about this school?

C9(P): You get more help than over there.

S: You get more help with your work – any other things?

C8(P): Also I think there's only one teacher in each class for ...

S: So you have much bigger classes.

C9(P): Yeh and you don't have helpers. You just have the one teacher.

S: So it's easier here and how would you describe what you do?

C7(P): Well you don't read English ofcourse.

S: Any other things?

All 3: Well you're not in school so long.

S: So here you're in school much longer and you have your lunches here as well and things like that.

C9(P): Yeh they have it at home.

C7(P): Or they go down the shop and buy it – so people go and get samosas.

S: If you had to describe to them what you do in your classes like if you did an English class – what would you say to them that you do?

C8(P): If you were doing an English class?

S: Yes if Mrs ...was teaching you in an English class how would you describe what you do?

INTERFERENCE

C7(P): You have to put your mind to it.

S: What sort of things do you think she helps you to understand?

C8(P): Things that are around us.

S: The world around, the environment?

C7(P): And like research.

C9(P): The background.

C7(P): The background to Pakistan.

S: Oh yes I think I was with you when you did things on Pakistan- you were doing projects weren't you ?

All 3: Yeh.

S: What other things do you think she teaches you?

C7(P): Like background and different religions and that lot.

S: Oh you do that as well?

C7(P): Like Hindus.

C8(P): She teaches us different religions so that people think that it's not all racist.

S: So you're not prejudiced about any religion?

C7(P): Wouldn't just do that one religion.

S: Do you like that- how do you feel about that?

C8(P): That's good.

C7(P): That's good. You don't do just like one religion cos you like it.

C9(P): You'd just get fed up.

S: So really you can compare it?

C7(P)andC8(P): Yeh

C8(P): Cos like there's only two Christians in the class.

C7(P)andC9(P): Yeh.

S: So you do learn about Christianity as well.

All 3: Yeh.

C7(P): About three something like that.

C8(P): But there's more Muslims in our class.

S: Yes I know.

C9(P): And there's only one Sikh girl.

C7(P): Only one boy who's a Christian.

C8(P): Only Jack.

C7(P): Yeh but he hasn't got a proper religion.

S: What do you mean he hasn't got a proper religion?

C8(P): He doesn't really believe.

S: Oh he doesn't belong to a religion. What do you think about that – if he doesn't really believe in a religion?

C8(P): He wanted – um last time it was Ramadan I think he wanted to learn about the Muslim religion.

S: He was really interested?

C7(P): He wanted to become a Muslim.

C9(P): Who?

C8(P): Jack.

S: Yeh my children go to ... and they have to learn al about Islam at ...as well because there are a lot of Muslims there too.

B: At the Islamic school all they have to learn about is just the Islamic religion.

S: So you don't learn about other things so much – so this school teaches about other things. And what other things can you think of – what sort of things – if you are in a lesson and you're studying things like English what sort of things makes Mrs ...pleased – what is she pleased with?

C8(P): Good spelling.

C7(P): Punctuation.

C9(P): Presentation.

C8(P): She wants to know if we can learn things by heart. That's why in the afternoon some people read poems.

C9(P): Reading suras is like that but it because..

S: So it's the same as reading the suras?

C8(P): Yes it's just like that but different.

S: And do you think it's being looked at differently – I mean the people teaching you are looking for something different?

All 3: Yeh.

S: And C6(P): he said that he wasn't old enough to read out at the Mosque at the Azan – are you able to read out aloud?

C7(P): You can't read the Azan aloud – you just have to study.

C9(P): Like I do it at home and my dad he has to learn it all.

C8(P): That's what we do in the Mosque – the Imman will read it out or sometimes.

C7(P): Remember when a little kid was reading the Azan?

C9(P): If they pick a child – it can't make a mistake.

C8(P): If somebody asked me I wouldn't be really confident.

S: Wouldn't you?

C8(P): No.

C9(P): It's up to you.

S: Ah right so you don't have to?

C8(P): Yeh there's no real shame reading the Azan but you do get Shalwar.

S: What?

C8(P): It's like good deeds or bad deeds.

S: So it's a good deed to do it if you've got the courage?

C7(P): I have the confidence – Yeh I know it all.

S: Ah brilliant. That's good.

C9(P): I listen to the namas but we have to learn by heart .

S: But you don't – girls don't...

C9(P): No

C8(P): We have three sort of no four separate kinds of ; the kiyda, the Koran, the soota as well and the ..

C7(P): But the suras they go like this ..

INTERFERENCE

C7(P): ...He speaks in Urdu.

S: I wish I could get the pronunciation as well. They're slightly different sounds from our English.

C8(P): The difference between this school and the Mosque as well is that if you lose the books you have to pay £l to get a new one or something. So that 's like gold.

C9(P): £5 for loosing the Koran and if you get it back you have to kiss it.

S: It's very precious.

All 3: Yeh.

C7(P): It's like sent from Allah to Mohammed...

S: So what about – can you tell me what it's like to be a Muslim then?

INTERFERENCE

C7(P): There are one million Christians in Pakistan.

S: Really – is this alright for Muslims in Pakistan?

C7(P)andC8(P): Yeh.
C9(P): And there are Muslims that stayed on in India but there are fewer of them.

S: So they're in the minority then?

C9(P): yes.

S: And what about your clothes as a female – do you wear western clothes as well?

C9(P): You have to cover your head.

S: When you go into the Mosque.

C9(P): Yeh.

S: Do you have to wear the corta in Pakistan as well?

C9(P): Not really – you have to wear it in shops or where there are a lot of men.

C7(P): In Saudi Arabia all ladies have to do that and they have to wear similar clothes. All men and women all wear white.

S: All white.

C7(P): Yeh , can't wear different.

S: Because when I went travelling in South East Asia I wore Shalwar Kameez because it felt more normal – it felt like fitting in.

C8(P): When I go to the Mosque I don't wear Shalwar Kameez; only when I go to Eid then I will ...But...

S: It's more unusual in... isn't it.

C8(P): Yeh. It's a good deed to wear Shalwar Kameez at Mosque.

S: I didn't realise that when men wear it it's called Shalwar Kameez as well.

C9(P): Yeh it's the same only the men's go right to the ground and have a collar.

S: So do you wear western clothes C9(P):?

C9(P): ? (yes)

S: So you are allowed to wear both?

C9(P): No.

C7(P): You're not allowed to wear a picture when you go to the Mosque – it's like different.

C9(P): Women can have a pattern.

C7(P): Men have buttons and a little pocket at the side.

S: So do you mix with Sikhs – because they go to the Gurdwara – so you don't?

C8 (P)andC7(P): No.

S: But you mix with Bangladeshis when they come to the Mosque?

C7(P)andC7(P): Yeh. Miss Bangladeshis

INTERFERENCE

Shamus's dad comes (? as far as S knows Shamus is Pakistani any way?)

S: I remember C1(B)'s dad says he goes .

C8(P): Yes C1(B)'s dad does come in.

S: Um so basically if someone came from abroad – from Pakistan what would you tell that person about this country?

C8(P): I'd tell them it's a good country but it's like freedom place – there's loads of muggings and that lot.

C9(P): Yeh cos like a house in our road it got burgled.

S: Did it?

C9(P): Yeh.

C7(P): And the black people make a crew now.

S: Made a what? What's a crew somebody also mentioned that.

C7(P): It's like a big gang.

S: Ah I see a crew.

C7(P): A bunch of people. They charged against the Muslims but they made a gang too.

C8(P): I heard that they ripped a Muslim's ear – both her ears – ripped them off – her earrings. This lady near ...park.

S: What about the white.. are they not in the crew? INTERFERENCE

(Some comment about a Muslim setting up the conflict in the first place).

S: OK I'll ask more about your lessons. So what do you get good marks for?

C7(P): Me I'm not good at English, I'm really good at science and maths.

S: What do you get marks for that?

C7(P): All the research and that.

C8(P): I'm good at writing stories but when it comes to maths and science I'm not really good.

C9(P): I can write stories but I don't like..

C7(P): I'm good at writing stories but I don't like it when they tell you which stories to write.

C7(P): When they give you options.

S: You like that?

B&C7(P): No.

C8(P): No we like to make our own.

S: So you like it when you can write anything you want. And if you are good at it C89P)why are you good at it?

C8(P): Once when I was in year five I wrote a story and got a level 4 for it.

S: And what was it that made it so good?

C8(P): It had some action and long words.

INTERFERENCE

S: Did you do it on your own.

C7(P): Yeh.

S: It had long words in it and did it have all that business about punctuation?

C8(P): Yes it also matters about how it's written.

INTERFERENCE

S: And in science what do you get good marks for C7(P)?

C8(P): I'm not good at that I don't want to learn about rivers and that ; I can't see any point in it.

S: It's to give us knowledge but this is not really my job. But when you get older it can be useful and it can help you to understand about our world and how our body works and things like that.

C9(P): I don't like about the plant life but I like about the life cycle but the food chains is too many details.

S: It's too complicated?

C8(P)andC9(P): Yeh it's too complicated.

C8(P): But I do like that we learn all about the environment.

S: So that's what you'd talk about when you talk about what you learn at school?

C9(P): I like doing about bodies.

S: You do. So you find that all very interesting but when you go to the Mosque – how do you feel about that learning? It's different isn't it?

C7(P): It's not like learning in Maths and science and things like that . We go to learn the Koran.

S: But why do you do that – what's the meaning of that?

C7(P): It's so that you can learn it for when you get older and when you go to Hadj you can know what to wear and things like that.

C8(P): If you learn the Koran it really does depend upon whether you can go to heaven.

S: And you have to do a lot of praying – do you like praying?

B: In Ramadan in the morning I used to pray with my sister.

C9(P): Yeh you have to do it five times a day.

S: And why do you do it?

C7(P)andC8(P): Allah.

C9(P): He's our god.

S: I thought so – no that's fine. I wondered – I just had to check because sometimes I think those things but I have to check.

C8(P): You have to learn it by the age of seven.

S: So you can't become a Muslim later on in life?
C8(P): You can't become a proper Muslim unless you do the sunna.

S: Isn't some of the Koran about how to live as well?

C9(P): And what to do and everything.

C8(P): It may have a name that you may recognise – I think it has the name Mey?

C7(P): I don't know about that...

INTERFERENCE

S: But basically you're quite happy that you've got two sets of rules and two lots of learning to do. – So are you aware that other people don't have to do all this?

C8(P): No – ah – sometimes you er because we go to school and then some people actually stay at the Mosque for three more hours.

S: It's such a long day!

INTERFERENCE

C8(P): Then you feel you don't want to do all this and go to school but then you enjoy seeing your friends.

S: So you quite like seeing your friends at school?

C7(P): Sometimes in the holiday you want to go to school cos you miss meeting your friends.

S: I know that happens to my children – they miss their friends in the holidays – what about you C9(P):?

INTERFERENCE

S: So you don't like to stay there for too long?

C8(P): At first I didn't like going to school but I do now – cos I meet all my friends.

S: But now you are going off to another new school it's exciting.

INTERFERENCE

S: And at home – it's different you can relax; you don't have to learn so much?

C8(P): At the Mosque you have to learn too ---once I had to learn some suras at home.

S: And you have homework from school as well. When do you have time to do all these things? When do you do your homework?

C9(P)andC8(P): After Mosque.

C7(P): I do it after Eastenders.

S: So you manage to watch television as well!

C9(P): I do it after I've eaten.

S: And you do need some food in all this as well (S laughs).

C9(P): But on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays I like watching Indian films.

C7(P): I just like English films.

S: Oh do you – so you don't have Indian films?

C7(P): No.

C9(P): We have it every day.

S: yes cos when I went to visit some houses I noticed that they have it on all the time.

C7(P): Miss, miss you know after my grandfather died I had to read 5 sufaras and my sister never told me. Miss she told me after I'd read one quarter so then I read four one day and then three quarters on the other day.

S: Wow. so you work really hard you lot – but you can relax at home – there's not so many rules?

C7(P): Well what I do is I just play outside with my brother – play football.

S: So is there anything else you' d like to tell me about Pakistan?

C8(P): It's really sandy and the cars; they don't have much cars there.

S: It's like a desert?

C8(P): And there's dried mud.

C9(P): They don't have the roads like we have in Britain.

S: Right so it's a bit poorer country?

C9(P): Yeh.

C8(P): Pakistan used to be a rich country with India and Bangladesh but not now.

S: Why, why's that?

C8(P): I don't know do you Abadit?

C7(P): It's about the rich and India and Bangladesh and Pakistan used to be one whole country – they used to be rich and then USA or something took ...

C9(P): British

S: The Raj?

C8(P): They just made Pakistan, India and Bangladesh separated.

S: So now there's been these wars and things.

All 3: Yeh.

C9(P): And in Pakistan people keep a lot of pets.

S: Keep a lot of pets – do they? Now I didn't see that in Bangladesh.
C8(P): Miss, miss you can't have a pet, a dog as a pet.

C7(P): Cos the Shitan's in them.

C9(P): But my aunty's had one for two years to guard the door there but she just puts it on a chain and then takes it away at the end of the day.

A: You can have cats though

INTERFERENCE

(Question about identity – re recorded the next day – at the end of this transcript).

C8(P): All of us three we spend most of our life in England but we're Muslims really.

C7(P): We've got Pakistani families and Pakistani ancestors.

S: And they've had different lives.

C8(P): My mum has all her relatives in Pakistan.

S: Does she miss her family?

C8(P): I think she does.

S: I gave her a book about Pakistan – did she like it?

C8(P): Yes she did.

S: Do you see yourself as British as well?

All 3: Yes.

S: Will you live in England for the rest of your life?

All 3: I don't know.

C8(P): I'd go to Hadj

C7(P): To keep the traditions.

C8(P): Miss most of the time India and Pakistan have a war – I don't know why. If we'd stayed one country then none of this would have happened

INTERFERENCE (C8(P) and C9(P) mention that India and Pakistan are similar)

C8(P): They all have their own little shops there and Indian s they have those little shops too.

S: So it's the same culture almost.

C7(P): Yeh they all have the same shops and the same sweets and all that.

S: Thank you. Is there any more anyone would like to say to add to this? Was it alright?

All 3: Yeh.

S: Because it really helps me to understand things better. Because I'm doing a portrait of ... community and what goes on. And I'm also showing how rich your culture is and your beliefs because a lot of people don't understand it all. I'm also looking at the educational system and the fact that you've also got your Mosque education.

C7(P): It's like, it's like I've got most of my relatives in Pakistan.

C8(P): It's hard to live cos every Mondays and Fridays you go to the Mosque. You go to school six hours and three or four hours at the Mosque and get back home around half seven.

C7(P): And on Sunday and Friday it's Jumma.

S: And you've also got other ways of teaching going on because as you said in the Mosque you learn by rote and you can get slapped or treated very strictly.

C8(P): While we are at school there are five Namas going on and we don't even get a chance to read them.

C9(P): But from now because it's longer days we only miss one – because the second one is at 7.30am – so we get to read it.

S: But you're still proud to be Muslim?

All 3 : Yeh (in turn).

S: Even if it is so hard because in the end you have a whole identity of your own.

C7(P): It doesn't really matter to me even if it's such hard work. I just like following my religion, following my grandfather because I'm following what my grandfather does.

S: So it's all your inheritance then?

C7(P): Yeh.

S: And keeping in your family traditions – that's brilliant well done – that's great. I admire you. I bet other people can not believe how much work you do.

C7(P): That's what I'll do beird like my grandfather did.

C8(P): Yeh it's sawa to keep a beird – a good deed.

S: To keep a bird?

B&C7(P): Beard, beard!

(All of us laugh).

S: So what's it for a woman – what's a good deed for a woman?

C9(P): To keep long hair – not cut it- But some of my sisters cut theirs a little bit but they don't really care. You are allowed to cut a little like that (pointing to about two inches). When the ladies go to Hadj you have to cut the hair that much and keep it in.

NEXT PAGE = NEXT DAY ENSURING THAT CERTAIN ISSUES ARE CLARIFIED WHERE THERE WAS INTERFERENCE

S: So what I want to ask you is how would you describe your identity – so we'll go round in order. So C9(P): how would you describe yourself?

C9(P): My name is C9(P): and I was born in ... and I am a Muslim and I'm proud to be a Muslim as well.

C8(P): My name is Bisharat Ali. I was born in ... and I'm proud to be a Muslim.

S: And you see yourself as British Pakistani?

C8(P): Pakistani British.

S: Right and what about you?

C7(P): My name is .... I am a Muslim and I'm born in Bristol and I am proud to be a Muslim and I see myself as a British citizen but I'd put Pakistani first.

S: And you C9(P): you didn't say what your identity is?

C9(P): I am a Muslim and then a British citizen.

C7(P): Like background.

S: OK that's great thank you. And now I'm going to ask you what's it like to be a Muslim? I'll ask C8(P) first.

C8(P): It's proud to be a Muslim and It's a good deed and if you do something wrong you can be forgiven because you can go to the Mosque.

C9(P): And do the Koran.

C7(P): It's a good deed , like it's hard work to be a Muslim, it's really, really hard, I reckon it's the hardest religion to have to be five times a day. You have to go to school; go to the Mosque; you have a really long day and a really long week.

S: So why do you do all this?

C9(P): Because we do it to please our God.

C7(P): Allah.

S: And also you said something yesterday about this life being....

C8(P): This is not a real life really; Allah is seeing if – whether we're proper Muslims or if we're not then I don't know what happens.

C7(P): This life is a practice – it's like Allah just likes seeing if you're good in this life and then sending you to heaven or hell.

C9(P): He's like seeing if you're doing things that are proper or not.

S: So it gives you a way into the next life as well?

All 3: Yeh.

THE END

SIKH CHILDREN

S: I am Sophia Gool and I live in ...and I'm of South Asian origin myself and my parents came from two different parts of India. They came from the Punjab area on my father's side and my mother's side came from Bengal and they're quite different places. I don't know much about these areas but I went back to my background at Christmas time and discovered some things then. I want to have a better understanding; a bigger understanding by asking you about your background and your origins. And your ideas about where you come from and about this school – not so much this school but your education – is that alright?

All 3: (quietly) Yes.

S: And if you speak a little bit louder than it's easier but I've got the mike really close so don't worry. OK. So the first question you can probably answer in turns because it's, "What do you like about visiting the Punjab?". So I'll start with you C10(S).

C10(S): Well I haven't been there but I'd like to go there.

S: But have you heard about it?

C10(S): No.

S: Really nothing?

C10(S): But my granddad's gone and my uncles and um they liked it there as well.

S: Did they say what they liked or did they show you photos?

C10(S): They showed us photos and the water's nice and blue and stuff like that.

S: Yes and it's very warm as well.

C11(S): I been when I younger and er...

S: Where did you go – did you go to the Punjab?

C11(S): Yeh and I can't remember much.

S: Can you remember anything – how old were you then?

C11(S): About three or four. There's lots of water and that.

S: There are lovely rivers actually because I took a bus from Chandigar which is in the Punjab to Amritzar to see the golden temple and on the way there was this huge river by the side – which was lovely – very blue as you said. Any way...

C12(S): I haven't been yet but my dad has. He says it's a nice place.

S: He likes it. Does he want you to go there one day?

C12(S): When I'm ten.

S: When you're ten you think you'll get there – would you like to go there?

C12(S): Yeh.

S: Have you heard anything about it?

C12(S): No.

S: Nothing? Alright.

C12(S): He did say something about.. I've forgotten what it is.

S: Oh a place – oh well never mind. But apart from this lovely blue sea or river you haven't heard anything about the Punjab? ...Alright OK – fine ...or if you can't remember it's going to be difficult to ask the next question – which is: 'would you like to live there?' What do you think C10(S).

C10(S): Um I don't know.

S: You haven't thought about it? What do you (looking at C11(S))...?

C11(S): Hmmm – I wouldn't want to live there.

S: You wouldn't want to live there, why's that?

C11(S): Cos I've heard some bad stuff about it.

S: Really, what sort of things have you heard about it?

C11(S): Cows going past and that.

S: Cows?

C11(S): Yeh.

S: What that they just cross the street and things?

C11(S): Yeh.

S: Have you heard that as well (turning to C10(S))?

C10(S): Yes.

S: Would you want to live there (turning to C12(S)).

C12(S): No.

S: Why's that.

C12(S): Cos my cousin's been and he says that there're snakes on the roof.

S: Snakes on the roof. Ah because it's a very hot country.

C11(S): Lizards on the roof.

S: Lizards – all these exotic animals. OK well see what you think when you do go – you might change your mind I think.

S: Um. Oh yes so the other question you'll probably be able to answer for me is: 'Can you explain (and this is quite important for me because I've seen two other Muslim groups from Pakistan and Bangladesh and I've asked them about their Mosque but I haven't seen any Sikhs – Sikh children at all . So it will be very important if you can fill me in) it's what happens at the Gurdwara?

C10(S): Well there's a person and he reads the holy book and at all times you have to cover your head and you have to take your shoes off.

S: Do you go there regularly?

C10(S): Yeh I go there some Sundays not regularly – only on special occasions.

S: Do you like going there?

C10(S): Sometimes it's alright.

S: What language do they speak there?

C10(S): Um Punjabi.

S: Can you speak Punjabi?

C10(S): No, not really.

S: So it's quite hard to understand.

C10(S): Yeh, I can understand it but I can't speak it that well.

S: It is – it's more difficult to speak it – and what about you C11(S)?

C11(S): I go there often.

S: You go there often – what once a week?

C11(S): Yeh – on Sunday.

S: What one do you go to – because I know there's one very large one and also a little one further down?

C11(S): I go to - not the one at ... road – the other one.

S: Is it the one on ... road?

C10(S): I go to the one at ... - I think that's a small one.

S: It's a small one yes. I think I know. Do you go to a large or small one C11(S)?

C11(S): Kind of large.

S: What sort of things do you do when you go there?

C11(S): You've got to listen, and you've got to cover your head and you've got to take your shoes off and that.

S: So it's quite strict. But do you also listen to...

C11(S): No I go outside and play.

S: You play with friends. And do you come in and eat some of the food?

C11(S): Yeh.

S: Cos you get food there as well don't you – in the lunga I think it is?

C11(S): Yeh.

S: What about you (turning to C12(S)) do you go to...?

C12(S): Yes but I don't know where it is.

S: No it doesn't matter.

C12(S): Cos there's lots of busy roads.

S: So you drive there with your family?

C12(S): Not with my family, with my uncle.

S: With your uncle? Do you manage to get there quite often?

C12(S): Yes. – Sometimes on Sundays.

S: And what do you do when you're there?

C12(S): I sort of just go out to play with my friends.

S: So it's a good place to meet up with other friends as well. But you (turning to C10(S)) go and listen as well?

C10(S): Yes or I also go outside with my cousins.

S: So it's a place where you can all come together. So what is it like to be a Sikh – that's a big question shall I start with you? (turning to C12(S)).

C12(S): I don't know.

S: You don't know what it is to be a Sikh - what does it feel like to be a Sikh?

C12(S): I like being a Sikh.

S: You like being a Sikh – that's fine – that's great. That's good enough. And what about you? (turning to C12(S)).

C10(S): It's quite strict the religion but it's alright being a Sikh – it's not as strict as the Muslim religion.

S: No it doesn't seem to be.

C10(S): And cos um some parents believe that they can only wear – they have to wear...

S: Shalwar Kameez?

C10(S): Yes.

S: But you do feel quite odd if you don't wear those clothes when you go there?

C10(S): Yeh cos I had to go to a party once and I didn't know where I was going and I had English clothes on and I was the odd one there cos everyone was wearing all this fancy stuff.

S: And they do look very decorative as well don't they?

C10(S): Yeh.

S: Because when I went to India I wore Shalwar Kameez all the time and I've never worn it before but when I was there everyone else was wearing it-so I felt more normal if I wore it ; I felt I could disappear into the crowd. What about you C11(S)– what's it like for you to be a Sikh?

C11(S): Um I – it's like in this school there are lots of Pakistanis and I like feel the odd one out.

S: And also because you have your hair differently?

C11(S): Mmmm.

S: Is that a problem for you or is it alright?

C11(S): It's alright.

S: It makes you feel different – so – perhaps you notice it more with boys than girls because of the hair?

C10(S): it's kind of better being a boy Sikh cos you don't have to wear all of this fancy stuff.

S: Don't you like wearing all that?

C10(S): No (S laughs).

C12(S): I don't like it as well – but my sister does.

S: She likes dressing up like that?

C12(S): Yes.

S: I know .., my son went to school at ... with a Sikh and he had to wear a – um- what's it called?

C11(S): Jura.

S: Jura and he had to wear it all the time and he found it quite odd but he did wear it most of the time but in the end he didn't anyway. But do you feel good about being a Sikh or do you just feel different from (turning to C11(S)) everybody?

C11(S): I feel good about it.

S: You feel good about it. Do you feel good when you go home or something?

C11(S): Yeh.

S: Have you heard any stories about the Sikh people or your religion? (pause) – not really – do they teach you anything about things like that?

C10(S): I heard a story but it was in school when these five men they said died for the religion but really they cut off sheep's heads instead of the men and ignored the five or something like that.

C11(S): There's a book around here somewhere [we are in the library].

S: Oh have you looked at it?

C11(S): Yeh.

S: Sorry you say something (turning to C12(S)).

C12(S): When I went to the Gurdwara last time they gave us these colouring sheets to do.

S: Ah yes and they had pictures of the people – Gurus?

C12(S): Yeh.

S: And you had to colour them in?

C11(S)andC12(S): Yeh.

S: So do they teach you at the Gurdwara though?

C10(S): Sometimes they like read it from the book but when it's big words and things like that I don't really understand it.

S: So they teach you about the religion or would they teach you about the religion? Can you speak Punjabi (turning to C11(S)).

C11(S): Yeh.

S: You can – ah that's really quite an achievement isn't it. Do you speak it at home?

C11(S): Yeh.

S: Do both your parents speak it then?

C11(S): No my dad doesn't cos he's deaf.

S: Ah right so your mum speaks it?

C11(S): My sister does as well.

S: Ah you've got a sister.

C11(S): Three.

S: Three sisters! That's quite a handful.

C11(S): One's in this school.

S: Ah right – and what about you ? (turning to S12(S)).

C12(S): I don't know what to say really.

S: have you got any brothers or sisters?

C12(S): I got one little sister in year 3 and a brother in reception and another sister.

S: And what's your mum's name?

C12(S): ....

S: Ah I know ...I'm taking her driving this afternoon – we do driving practice together. I thought you might be ...'s daughter but I wasn't sure – but I know now! So in your house there are quite a lot of pictures of different Gurus.

C12(S): Yeh.

S: And your mum's lent me a book about learning Punjabi – which I haven't managed to do yet – you're probably better off having a copy of it – do you learn it?

C12(S): Yeh

S: Does she speak it to you?

C12(S): Yes but sometimes she speaks English.

S: And what about your dad does he speak Punjabi?

C12(S): Yes.

S: He does.

C12(S): And English.

S: And English – that's pretty good isn't it.

C12(S): My dad he got this book from India and it tells you all the stories and there's one with this snake and the Guru was resting and it was really hot and the snake covered him.

S: Oh so he looked after the Guru – so snakes in that story were very good- protective.

C12(S): But my friend said that the snake bit him because he was asleep.

S: But he didn't?

C12(S): No he didn't.

S: So you hear the odd little story. OK. .. So all of you feel it's good to be Sikh?

All3: Yeh.

S: Now if you were coming – if someone was coming from the Punjab – a Sikh relative was coming here from the Punjab and you had to try and describe what it's like at this school to them – what would you say to him/her?

C10(S): It's quite fun but it's boring in class at times. But we do fun stuff like P.E and art and free choices and stuff.

S: And what would you say C11(S)?

C11(S): Um about the same as her. Art and P.E.

S: So you like that. Would you tell him /her anything else, would you tell him/her it's a bit odd to be a Sikh?

C11(S): No.

S: Would you be pleased to have somebody else coming like you?

C11(S): Yes (voice llightens).

S: Another person to back you up. What about you? (turning to C12(S)).

C12(S): I'd say we learn things and what happened long time ago.

S: Ah right so your history – your background. And that's interesting is it – do you like that?

C12(S): Yes.

S: So you wouldn't want to warn them about anything? It's quite difficult because if you've never been to India you don't know what sort of world they've come from. You'd probably be asking them more questions – like what's it like out there and things like that. It's quite difficult this question as well but anyhow. So what sort of things do you learn in your lessons – what sort of things do you get good marks for?

C12(S): I think last week we did some tests and some reading tests. I don't know.

C10(S): We've just done SATS Science, English and Maths. I thought English would be the easiest but everyone said it would be the hardest and I didn't believe them but it was the hardest.

S: It was the hardest.

G: Mmm

S: Oh that's a shame then everyone gets so worried.

C10(S): Yes.

S: And am I right in thinking that it's been about two terms that you've spent preparing for them?

C10(S): Yeh we've been- before the SATS we've been just doing test and practising for exams.

S: And what about you Hira – what do you think the teacher wants you to do?

C11(S): I get good marks for my Maths.

S: For your Maths – is that what you're good at?

C11(S): Yeh Maths and Art.

S: Maths and Art – And what about your parents do you think they want you to be good at anything do you think?

C11(S): No.

S: So just anything?

C12(S): When I grow up my parents say you should have a good job.

S: They want you to have a secure job and how are you going to get there? (pause) You don't know – Is it something to do with schoolwork?

C12(S): It's like do your homework and that....

S: Doing all your homework to prepare yourself. And what about you though (turning to S10(S)) . Your parents do they have some ambition for you?

C10(S): I don't know but they want me to stay on at sixth form in the secondary school and I may be able to go to university. I don't know.

S: Would you like to?

C10(S): Yeh.

S: And what about you? (turning to S11(S)).

C11(S): No.

S: You wouldn't. Would your parents want you to go to University?

C11(S): I don't know.

S: You don't know. You just hope you get through at the moment. But they don't mind if you just like doing things like art?

C11(S): Yeh.

S: And you also enjoy Maths – I don't want to make any more of this I just wondered. So if you're looking at a different culture in what way might it be different from the Sikh culture? If your parents weren't Sikh do you think they would expect something different from you – do you think?

C10(S): If I was a Muslim I'd probably have to wear different clothes all the time like C9(P) does.

S: All the time.

C10(S): Yeh but um – I don't know.

S: You don't think there is any big difference – or is there?

C10(S): Well I wouldn't like to be the only Sikh because I'm the only Sikh in my class because there are more Muslims and just a little bit of English people.

S: Do you mind being the only Sikh?

C10(S): No.

S: No - you like the idea you can wear western clothes as well.

C10(S): Yeh.

S: So what do you think makes you a Sikh though – what makes you feel like a Sikh?

C10(S): Um – I don't know.

S: You don't know but you do feel like a Sikh?

C10(S): Yeh (with enthusiasm).

S: And you C11(S)?

C11(S): I don't really know.

S: Do you think your parents are different from other parents – do you, they like different things because of their religion?

C11(S): Um – not really.

S: They don't feel that they have to educate you about your religion?

C11(S): Yeh but –

S: But it's not so strict?

C11(S): It is strict but not that strict.

S: Compared with a Muslim's.

C11(S): Mmm.

S: What about you C12(S)– do you think it's different being a Sikh at home? (pause). Do you mix with other families?

C12(S): No.

S: No – are you aware of other people living differently (pause) not really. So you feel your parents just behave like parents but if they were western do you – you don't really know. It's difficult for me to try and understand sometimes what makes people Sikhs. With the Muslims they have these very strict routines and they tell me what it's like but with you it seems like it's more individual...

C10(S): Yeh.

S: ...Is that possible that parents are quite different? Do you meet up with other families – you meet up at the Gurdwara but are there any other times?

C11(S): Well only if there's a party on.

C10(S): Well I go round to my cousins, my mum she goes to work so she does come round sometimes as well..

S: With your extended family – your relations. What about you C11(S) do you do that too?

C11(S): Yeh I go round to my cousins to my auntie's – I go round to my auntie's every day.

S: Everyday.

C11(S): Cos I got to go there to support them.

S: And what about you (looking at C12(S)) you've got quite a large family haven't you?

C12(S): Yes.

S: But I do know that you go up to your relatives around Manchester.

C12(S): Yeh when it's the holidays.

S: And do they go to the Gurdwara up there a lot? Is there a larger Sikh community up there?

C12(S): Yeh.

S: So that must feel a bit different...

C12(S): My mum has got four brothers and four sisters.

S: It's a large family! And what about you Gurmeet is your family a large family as well?

C10(S): Yeh – up there they are quite strict about the religion.

S: Have you been up there?

C10(S): Not to Manchester – to where my grandma lives.

S: Where's that?

C10(S): In Birmingham.

S: And what's it like there then – perhaps you can tell me what it's like there?

C10(S): Um it 's not strict really strict but it is quite strict because my nan doesn't – she doesn't like it when I don't cover my arms and things like that; she does want me to wear what I should wear.

S: Shalwar Kameez?

C10(S): Yeh. She wants me to wear that all the time but I don't want to but only when I go to the Gurdwara and things like that.

S: So up there it's the same? But you 're aware that she would like you to (C10(S):yeh) different clothes but you're quite glad that she doesn't insist?

C10(S): Yeh.

S: And do you travel to see relatives in different parts of the country Hira?

C11(S): Yeh just in Manchester.

S: I think recently last year you had a celebration – Va – what is it?

C10(S): Vaisaki. Last year they had a big celebration.

S: At Vaisaki you had a big celebration.Did you watch any videos about that or anything?

C12(S): That was when we were in Manchester and there was a programme.

S: Did you see it?

C12(S): Yeh.

S: I was very impressed; I went to an exhibition in London that had all the Sikh history and pictures of all the old Gurus and there were lots of Sikh people there looking very glamorous in their Shalwar Kameez. I know what I should have brought in – a book for you which has pictures of the Gurus and things.

C11(S): There's a book around here and I go through that.

S: Any way you did all go and celebrate Vaisaki.

All 3: Yeh.

S: So that was supposed to be – was it three hun...

C10(S): Three hundredth celebration of Sikhs.

S: Do you learn a bit about the Gurus – d'you learn about the different Gurus?

C10(S): Um I know about Guru Gobin Singh – he was a teacher – that's about all I know.

S: Do you know about any of the Gurus? (turning to C11(S)).

C11(S): No.

S: There's about – about how many of them are there?

C11(S): Nine or ten.

S: And they all fought really hard to...

C10(S): I think they're ten prophets.

S: Ten prophets. Well there's a whole wisdom in the Sikh religion – I went to talk to an old guru – no sorry not guru – because you don't have them any more – they're all dead now. I went to talk to this old guy – a Dr Kirpal Singh in Chandigar and he told me things about the Sikh religion and how Sikhs sometimes outside the Punjab do things differently because they live in different worlds – like .[this area] is different from the Punjab (we all laugh).

C10(S): Yeh.

S: So Sikhs pick up things from that area not just from Sikh culture. Do you (turning to C12(S)) know about different Gurus – I think your mother likes one Guru in particular – you have a picture in your dining room – d'you which one it is?

C12(S): I think it's Guru Gobind Singh.

S: Yes he seems a very well known one.

C11(S): Yeh and Guru Nanak.

S: Guru Nanak – that's the one I have pictures of – he's the oldest one isn't he – so you do know a bit – it's coming out a bit! OK .So do you see yourself as – if you were going to describe yourself in terms of your identity – what would you put first? Sikh or Asian or Punjabi or British- how would you put it?

C10(S): I'm Sikh but was brought up in England and um I speak English and Punjabi and um..

S: And would you say that you would like to go to the Punjab?

C10(S): Yeh but I wouldn't want to live there I'd just like to visit.

S: And what about you (turning to C11(S)) (pause) or what would you say (turning to C12(S)).

C12(S): I wouldn't know.

S: Would you say you were British or Sikh – what comes first to mind?

C11(S): Sikh.

S: You'd say you were Sikh – that's the clearest part of you?

C12(S): Yes Sikh.
S: And would you say you were Punjabi?

C11(S): Yeh.

S: Or Asian or?

C11(S): Punjabi.

S: Punjabi rather than Asian is that right?

S: Would you say you were British as well?

C11(S): Yeh.

S: So you'd say you were Sikh British or Sikh Punjabi British or something like that. What about you?

C12(S): I don't know?

S: You don't know but you'd put Sikh down first?

C12(S): Yeh.

S: I just wondered because for me it's also quite difficult because we have all these forms to fill in when you get older – you have lots of forms every now and then to fill in to do with your ethnic origin and they give you a list of options to fill in. And there's this Asian other – so if you don't want to put down that you're Indian or South Asian or something you can tick that box. It's actually a bit like me because I'm not quite fitting in – not straight anything. I'm definitely just other (S laughs and so does S10(S)). Because some people chose to put British first and some people chose to say that they're Black. It's also to do with who you identify with most. OK . That was a difficult question. And howdo you find living in ...?

C10(S): It's alright.

S: What about you ? (turning to C12(S)).

C12(S): It's a bit boring.

S: When you go up to Manchester is it a bit different there – more exciting?

C12(S): Yeh it's got nice places.

S: And what about you (turning to S11(S)) is there somewhere else you'd like to be?

C11(S): No this is the best place.

S: This is the best place?

C11(S): Yeh.

S: Oh well that's good isn't it. You've got your cousins and things. Which school will you go to next S10(S); you must be thinking about that?

C11(S): ....

S: So do you think there's more Sikhs at ...?

C11(S): No but I just like going there.

S: Because it's nearby? And do you visit it at other times then? (shakes his head) No you've never been there- what about you then S10(S) you've got it all coming?

C10(S): Well I don't live in ... – I Live in ... – it's not boring but it's boring sometimes but I get to go round to my cousins and go round my friends' house and stuff.

S: Are your friends Sikhs as well?

C10(S): No.

S: Ah right...

C10(S): They're almost all English.

S: So you mix with lots of different people?

C10(S): Yeh I want to go to ... school as well but there's different people there, there's Sikhs, there's Muslims – there's more Sikhs than there is here.

S: And what do you think about English or White people who don't have a religion – are you aware that some people don't have a religion?

C10(S): Yeh.

S: And what does that feel like?

C10(S): It doesn't really bother me. It's just normal ...

S: Just normal – it's England. But you feel better off having your religion or feel they'd be better off having a religion?

C11(S): I don't really know.

S: Are you looking forward to going to ...?

C10(S): Yeh.

S: And your sister C11(S)– is she younger than you?

C11(S): One's younger and two are older.

S: And where do they go?

C11(S): ...

S: Ah well there you go then – you've got your connection already. And what do they say about ... – what do you know about ...?

C11(S): There are like moving classes and things like that.

S: Have you heard anything about ...? (turning to S12(S)).

C12(S): No cos I'm the eldest.

S: Yes that's quite a responsibility - so are you the eldest?

C10(S): No I'm the youngest.

S: You're the youngest – alright. Yes I was the eldest and I was always the first person who had to go to places and it is a bit scary sometimes; on the other hand you get a confidence if you have to go first because you get used to it.

C10(S): My brother and sister say it's good at ... but my brother's just left now because he's just done exams and I think my sister really likes it there so I hope I will as well.

S: That sounds great – I mean it sounds nice to have relatives there as well because it gives you a starting point.

C10(S): And most of my friends in my class are going there as well.

S: Ah right so you'll all have that security as well. I think I've asked all the questions that I was going to ask you. But is there anything that you'd like to add in terms of speaking about your background and your Sikh identity?

All3: No.

S: No. So there's nothing you'd like to ask me either?

C10(S) and C11(S): No.

S: So can I just summarise basically what I've understood. It's that you have quite a few relatives you go and visit. And you sometimes go to the Gurdwaras but you don't go regularly – although S11(S) you do usually. (C11 (S): Yes). You don't have to learn about the Gurus there; you can just play around there. And you feel proud of being Sikh or you feel happy to be a Sikh and you'd quite like to go to the Punjab but you don't think you'd like to live there? Is that all right?

All 3: Yeh.

END

APPENDIX FOUR: INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER M (MAY 2000)

S: As a teacher what would you like to give your children- what would you like to contribute to their development? You can define education, as you like.

M: Taking it quite literally I'd like them to have a sound foundation in the 3 Rs- hoping they'll do better academically and settle into professions they want to do. I want them to do well academically but more importantly I want them to have the right values. I want them to have a really good sense of discrimination and to be able to understand the difference between right and wrong. Probably the government will love me for this, especially the Conservatives. But it really means something to me to be able to discriminate between right and wrong – to be able to make choices. And I want them to be proud of who they are because a lot of our children come from the ethnic groups. I want them to have a clear sense of identity; I want them to be proud of their background and who they are. I want them to have self-confidence about themselves, about what they are.

S: You mention you would like them to be proud of who they are; there is an article I came across called: 'multicultural education tends towards monoculturalism that mitigates tolerance towards exotic details'. In other words that the underlying agenda is not to do with other cultures but rather to do with a particular culture which the National Curriculum encourages through its focus on the academic and its apparent neutrality.

M: When you are talking about another culture are you talking about an Eurocentric culture?

S: Yes. I wondered if you had been aware of any constraints when you are trying to address the concerns of the ethnic minorities, as you were talking about, and prerogatives of the National Curriculum?

M: In one curriculum area like history a lot of the topics are to do with European or British history but there is probably one fifth of it that deals with histories of other cultures. And we have a choice of West African States or Indus valley and we generally take the Indus valley because so many of our children come from Pakistan and Bangladesh. So we do quite a detailed study of this in year six. So there is some scope for this in certain subject areas. Being a school where there are so many ethnic groups you cannot help bringing in some of their cultures and languages into what you do. A lot of our R.E. celebrations, and even assemblies teachers do themselves; do focus on different cultures, religions and languages.

English, English is predominantly British but we also do a lot of non-standard English. We sometimes deal with word order and bring in other languages, especially the languages the children bring with them – just to heighten their interest in languages and grammars. We naturally do our best rather than a conscious effort to make it a multicultural education. The students themselves come from such different places that we do try to incorporate cultures from different parts of the world.

S: So in some ways you accommodate their particular cultures and so you don't notice any particular constraints with the National Curriculum?

S: So in some ways you accommodate their particular cultures and so you don't notice any particular constraints with the National Curriculum?

M: I think a teacher who has taught longer or taught in the period before the National Curriculum might be able to answer this in a better way. But since I've started teaching in this country I've taught with the National Curriculum so I know no different – and I try to adjust my ways to suit the children's needs and follow the National Curriculum at the same time. So working with this all the time.

S: When you were describing earlier [when I arrived, this is what M started to talk about before we started recording] the atmosphere around preparing for these tests (reference to National Curriculum Tests) how would you express that to me now?

M: Oh, it's so ugly- I absolutely hate it. But in early January I've been to a couple of training courses where teachers from around ... come in to discuss how we can boost the children's results and so on. And the fever really begins to build up and even though you try not to get the children stressed about it; you cannot help mentioning at least twenty times a day- in the SATS you would do this: In the English SATS you would do this. I think since February we have dropped the National Curriculum and focusing only on Maths, English and Science because every school wants to achieve certain targets results wise. And there's a big build up and the children hate it, I hate it and the parents who are aware of this come in and let me know how miserable it is making their children. Most of the parents aren't aware of things and as they come from a culture where tests are OK so they think that their children come to school to learn Maths, English and Science and to improve their chance at tests.

S: So are you suggesting that you as a teacher have slightly different ideals in terms of education than some of the South Asian parents might?

M: Yes I think so.

S: What would you say those differences were?

M: I don't think South Asian parents especially those living in ... are aware of the education system here, nor the one that they've come from and there too they have a very shallow knowledge of the systems there. To them, doing well means doing well academically with their reading, writing and Maths. So if you say your child shows a lot of flair in dance and music they're not as pleased as if you say she's exceptionally good at Maths – then they feel really good about it.

S: Is it possible to suggest that they have their own idea of right and wrong? When you were saying that you would like to give pupils a sense of moral responsibility, would you consider that within their own communities, because of their religions, that they take on that aspect of the education for their children? That they see the school as dealing with the 3 Rs and at home, in the community....

M: Yes, yes I would agree because a lot of the children spend at least a couple of hours at the Mosque after they leave school. They do their prayers everyday and their whole life revolves around their religion; it does play a big

part in their lives. I would think that the South Asian parents feel that the moral training is their responsibility and formal academic work and disciplining is the school's as well.

S: Disciplining as well?

M: Yes definitely.

S: So, does that mean disciplining within the school grounds?

M: Yes.

S: But outside the school it is theirs?

M: I would hope so - although there isn't always evidence of it.

S: Although the National Curriculum is suggesting that parents aren't doing their job properly – because in the concept of citizenship there's a lot about how the school is to take on more and more of this because children are not turning out the way society wants?

M: I had a recent retraining on road safety and people from the road safety department came and they said that the school needs to take on the responsibility because parents weren't pulling their weight and I'm sure this applies to this area.

S: What do you feel about this though? What do you know about the South Asian community in ...?

M: I'd say most parents do train their children into what is right and wrong because it's just part of our lives and it just happens at home. But there is such a strong influence of society of the outside world around them –so that the moment the children get away from their parental constraints, they try to follow the examples of their White and other friends and the behaviour outside school can be appalling. I've known quite a few girls who have veils on and are wonderfully devout Muslims and once they're out they behave completely differently. It's their way of rebelling against the constraints that are imposed on them at home.

S: And do you think that things like this are addressed at all at home - that there is this disjuncture? Because, it is quite critical in terms of their development.

M: It is, it is.

S: I mean I don't know what happens, I'm just curious and as a teacher I suppose you are always having to observe it?

M: It is such a difficult issue that as a teacher I wouldn't want to deal with it unless I had the training. I don't have the training to do it. I think I understand the conflict that goes on within them better than someone that hasn't experienced the conflict within themselves.

S: In the sense that you are South Asian yourself?

M: Yes in that sense some of the things that my children do at home are not quite acceptable.

S: Is that because you are more lenient do you think - why not to the same degree?

M: I've probably grown up within the Western educational system and I have Western views.

S: And you have incorporated more Western values- but this doesn't seem to be happening in .... Because of the development of more Gurdwaras and Mosques there's some movement and definitely transitions going on but there seems to be quite a tenacity about another way of life.

M: I think parents are quite scared that their children are going to go to the other extreme and become completely Anglicised in their way of life and therefore they're hanging on to the old way of life and culture from back home. So therefore are pulling in that direction just to stop the children from becoming too Westernised.

S: How effective do you think this is?

M: No completely opposite effect on things. I think the minute the children are away from home they are rebelling. I see lots of Asian girls, or rather Gujarati girls because I come from the Gujarat community. I see lots of Gujarati girls going with boys from a completely different race and culture and it's probably their way of rebelling against what is happening at home.

S: There seems to be a generation of young mothers who have returned to the fold as it were – who once married are returning.

M: And how happy are they I wonder? I've known quite a few who have grown up in this country and have had their taste of various things and gone back to Pakistan or India to get married and brought back grooms. They've come back and they're complete misfits.

S: So there's a real tension?

M: I don't think it really works in most cases. I am generalising of course.

S: I am just wondering, I imagine that this is what's really going on although the community denies this. If you go into the community it's quite incredible – you get the impression that the community will remain South Asian for a long time, if not forever because there doesn't seem much respect for Western values and beliefs.

M: I hope this is not too damning? I'm taking the point you've just made and I am aware that many of our Muslim children are very very Muslim almost to the point of extremism. If somebody were to say something that was in anyway anti Muslim they would be prepared to kill that person.

S: Really?

M: Yes they feel so strongly. So I understand what you mean about the point you've just made. I've also met several graduates and undergraduates from the Sikh community who've suddenly taken to their religion as if they're seeing it with new eyes and they're also seeing things that have made them rather extremist and intolerant rather than open-minded. I think it's a bit unhealthy when youngsters...

Sophia; Feel so extreme, so fanatical?

M: Yes, mmm.

S: For you; what are the issues for you? I mean what aspects of Eastern culture. Would you want to see continue?

M: I'd like them to know about our culture because in that way India has a lot to offer. In that way I'd like them to know more about our culture, more about our history and more about our religion. I come from the Hindu religion and although I'm not being extremist (she says with a laugh in her voice) I must admit it's a very tolerant religion, open-minded religion. It has a place for non-believers like me (she laughs and so do I).

S: So you don't feel you have lost it all?

M: No not at all. I always talk to my children about those things hoping that they will appreciate the best of Hindu culture and religion. But I think the Western culture has also made a great impact on me because I don't believe in any of the rights and rituals that happen in a typical Hindu government. Whenever, my children ask me the big questions of life I don't have the right, pat ready-made answers that other families would provide. There are lots of questions that I have no answers to. Questions like death and life and God.

S: So you're not trying to tidy things up in any sense?

M: No, no.

S: But when you're talking about Eastern religion - what gives it the strength? Because - England isn't really a religious country?

M: I think when I'm talking about the Muslim religion – because ... is very much part of that culture/religion; to me it's almost a sort of brain washing style. Children blindly follow things, without questioning, without looking at things at a deeper level.

S: So that's a tension that you experience being their teacher –because as a teacher you're always asking children to reflect themselves, asking them to question, to be more articulate. You're suggesting that...

M: I'm not suggesting to them that they should forget about their religion. I think religion is a wonderful thing if you can believe in it. But to believe in it so much that that you believe everything else is trash is not right. I want my children at school to be open minded, more tolerant. This is what I believe and it' s OK to believe in what you want.

S: I wonder sometimes, looking at the females as well, such as such assertive females like A (a Bangladeshi pupil in the class), on one level she was

concerned that Bangladesh was associated with such poverty and is a third world country; she was very concerned about the image that was being created and on another level she is very assertive.

M; Yes, yes – she takes after her mother.

S: So her mother has survived like this!

M: I don't know if this is relevant but one of the Jamaican girls in my class was making fun of a child's name and she didn't realise that the child's name was also the name of the prophet. So just as you would say Nicky Picky, she was saying Abdullah Bukdulla – something like that- and she got beaten up at dinner time by a lot of Muslim boys. And they said that she'd better prepare a grave and be prepared to get buried after school that day and she was so petrified that she stayed in class until her mother came to collect her. And then I spoke to the class and I said – she knows nothing about Muslim religion and I'm sure what she said had nothing to do with an attack on the religion. I said of course it's not right to make fun of somebody's name but have you all never called anybody a name? And they said – yeh, yeh we have. I said I'm sure it's something that can be forgiven isn't it? And she said sorry and I thought this was the end of the matter and came the next play-time she was brutally beaten up by the same group of Muslim boys again and that made me so cross because they seemed to agree with everything I said.

S: Do you think it's because they didn't really feel that you understood - I'm not saying that you didn't either- but that you didn't understand the intensity of their feelings?

M: Probably yes, because they did argue quite a bit with me whenever I made a point – but do you think? But do you feel ? - and those sort of things.

S: So that in some way reflects some of the tensions between the sort of values they're picking up at home, the hostility towards Western values and any indication of being blasphemed in any way.

M: Yes, yes.

S: It heightened a feeling that they have to defend their own identity because of their Muslim identity. Even though I would have though that ... was a fairly secure environment for the Islamic religion?

M: Yes, yes I would agree.

S: I mean there have been one or two parents I've talked to who have suggested that the type of Islamic teaching that influences Muslims here and is circulated in ... is very limited. And that there are other voices of Islam; that are not so much heard about in the ... community, though they do exist in other communities – another attitude.

M: Really.

S: I mean I'm just wondering whether, as there is such an emphasis in the National Curriculum literature, for teachers and schools, that says that the community is something that the school should liaise with), how much do you

think it is possible and how much is it necessary? How much is it possible to liaise with the parents? What is your experience?

M: I'll tell you about my experience (laughs). Recently because of the government dictates, the school and parents had to sign a contract and that was to be done on parents' evening. And most of the parents that turned up were White parents and a couple of Bangladeshi parents and one Pakistani. It's supposed to be an agreement between the school and the parents/community and the parents have to say how they can contribute to their children's education and hardly any of the South Asian parents ever returned their forms. They never turn up for parents evenings so you can never discuss things with them and when you discuss you're never quite sure if it is getting through; or they are just saying things because they think this is another piece of paper to get out of the way.

S: And also because they want to show willing?

M: Yes – even if they don't understand. They don't question the system, they think the school is supposed to know what they're doing so we'll agree with everything they're saying. I think the school, I mean when I was working in the infants it was an impossible task. I mean in year six I don't expect any parents to turn up but even in the infants where parents could have come in and read with the children or helped, I could never get anyone in. I think much of it may be because they've got other younger siblings at home to look after, or a father-in-law or mother-in-law, so it's all the household chores, and there is no time to go and sit with your child. What you want is your child to be at school, so that you can get on with the other things you have got to do.

S: And you focus on the other things that you are going to give your child- moral or religious dimensions?

M: Yes. And I think they're quite happy to see their children get homework because they so often ask; why doesn't my child have homework? Because they don't consider reading a book as homework or listening to the news and jotting down notes as homework. They want a formal set piece of paper and they keep asking; can you send more homework? So they're ready to support with that – just ensuring that the child does that. I seem to have veered off there – what was I talking about?

S: Well parental involvement – to what extent is it possible and to what extent is it necessary?

M: To what extent is it necessary? Ideally I think I'd like the parents to know what we are teaching in school; generally an idea, an awareness of the school day and the school routine. I don't think most parents know, neither are they interested. We send a lot of letters home on a termly basis. They don't get home because the children don't think their parents will read it, or it's not important enough. When they get home I don't know if they are read?

S: So that's another situation where the children are caught in the tensions as well. These messages are supposed to go but because of their expectations of what the reception will be, the children are translating things all the time. Editing things..

M: Yes, yes absolutely. On parents evening they're (the children) are the ones that are translators. Because I speak Hindi it's not such a problem, but I know that with other teachers it's a problem. You just have the child there doing the interpreting and you don't know what they're saying (laughs).

S: I know because I've had the children interpreting for me when I've done the interviews.

M: Really. Actually at this parent's evening I said to the children tell your parents that even if they can't come, to bring back a letter and say why they can't come or an acknowledgement that this letter has actually reached home...so..

S: So they do want their children to do well?

M: They do.

S: So is it that...for instance there is a view in the National Curriculum documentation for teachers – that teachers have to liaise with the community and it identifies 3 types of ways that parents are encouraged to take part in the school. One is school focused – where the school encourages parents to be involved in fund raising and governing. Another is curriculum focused – where parents are expected to help the children with their homework and help in the classroom. And the other one is a parent-focused attitude in the school where parents are seen to be very important educators in their own rights. Where do the parents fit in these groups at [this school]?

M: Probably C.

S: So the school sees parents as educators in their own right?

M: At home – yes.

S: They don't expect them to engage on the other two levels?

M: They would like them to.

S; It is a major issue for schools; that is being imposed on schools and I can see how it would be helpful to have an awareness on both sides. You're caught somewhere in the middle of it – but on the other side, as a parent myself, I just feel it's so difficult to get involved with the school unless you've got the time.

M: I don't have a minute – I don't even make it to parent's evening.

S: So if you've got a whole other agenda as well – another community going on – it's a very difficult task – and if you've got to take your children to the Mosque in the evening as well, how are you going to fit it in? Obviously it seems there are tensions and those tensions need to be addressed, but on the other hand, if the parents do go in, what is going to be discussed are things that the parents wouldn't have any knowledge about any way?

M: Yes, you're absolutely right. And I can't always explain to the parents what level three or four I would want the child to reach. I can't open the National Curriculum document and say – level three means being able to ...plus...it's meaningless.

S: So if they did come in, their interest would be just to be told that their children are doing alright?

M: A broad general statement about how they're doing work-wise and behaviour-wise.

S: And behaviour-wise? And how would they react if they were told that their children misbehave?

M: Ah – it varies from family to family even within the community. But I know that a lot of children are very scared that their parents will find out about any misbehaviour at school. So it's a good thing always to hold over their heads at all times! (We both laugh).

S: So what you're also saying is that there really isn't time. I mean you've had to focus this term particularly on preparations for three subjects, not any other subjects despite your awareness and knowledge that the children are finding it difficult and trying at times.. and that is very focused anyway, but then you're saying that even at any other time there is not time to consider issues around disjuncture between the school and community. That isn't part of the agenda – I mean the school is being assessed competitively with other schools on very key things to do with the curriculum...

M: ONLY, only.

S: So even if Ofsted portrays a very positive image of the school's pastoral - care, in fact in real terms on a competitive level it's not really relevant because of the league tables?

M: Yes- Mmm- we're somewhere at the bottom and it's quite disheartening. We all work so hard, the children and ourselves.

S: Yes, yes and there is a good atmosphere.

M: It is a good atmosphere I must admit.

S: But in some ways the real pressure is that you are trying to achieve things that are not directly relevant to the things that are going to concern the children later on in life.

M: Absolutely.

S: I mean you say that you would like to teach the children about right and wrong but in fact to enforce another set of moral values at school – I mean for the children it would be very (M interrupts as below).

M: Yes, yes (laughs). You listen to my right and wrong not what your parents say....

S: Can you imagine that for the children?

M: (laughs). Yes, yes I never thought of that actually. I thought there was one universal set of right and wrong. (We both laugh).

S: For me this is quite divergent in terms of where I'm going in terms of my research, but I know that my son loved philosophy classes at school in Australia. Children love questions and wondering what does it mean. And you'd be up against the fact that there are other meanings?

M: I think a lot of our South Asian cultures don't develop the habit of questioning among individuals. It's always accepting what you receive, not questioning things. I think that is the big difference I find between Eastern and Western education. In the West you're taught to question all the time.

S: Well it's also to do with concepts. We're taught that we're autonomous and Western culture. But this is also not compatible with a sense of belonging to a family responsibility – where your choice is different.

M: Yes it's a really tricky balance between things. On the one hand you're saying you should have your self identity and your individuality and on the other you're saying you need to be self- effacing and blend into the family structure; which may be a really extended family. I think there is a very big difference between Eastern and Western values and I don't know what happy balance you can strike.

S: You address it in your own way – but then you are exempt from belonging to any community. I mean it must be quite powerful to be involved with the community and then there is the school as a very tangent thing really. I think it's that way round in ....

M: Yes.

S: I think there are a lot of social customs in .....

M: Yes.

S: I mean as a Westerner who's actually benefited from individualism, being autonomous and having loads of choices and being able to make choices, I still think sometimes I'm unhappy about the way I have such high expectations of my own choice and autonomy. I mean to some extent I'm not intolerant but I'm not very able to see myself belonging to a group. (M Laughs). I mean I've trained myself to be independent. But I can see the positive element of being able to share; to feel part of a whole rather than as an individual and that element - that is part of the family and also the potential of religion – to – as you suggest have a stabilising effect. A reassuring dimension to your life. I think these are very positive things. For instance, tolerance, which in some ways is what the South Asian community does represent. Not just out of a sense of fear but that they don't want the insecurity that they can see exists when people decide to branch off in all different ways and become totally independent.

M: I think this sense of belonging becomes all the more intense because you know that otherwise you get isolated in a foreign land – so you stick together.

S: You could say that's to do with racism?

M: Yes, difference.

S: Negative difference in terms of the wider society. Also-a protective reaction? I'm interested that some return. I'm interested that some people do return – there are obviously more unusual characters but generally the younger women between the ages of twenty and forty, actually choose to belong to the community. And they are quite outspoken about their different ways and how they want to belong. Something happens in between, in those teenage years, which is obviously very complex and difficult – which is not known about or explored. The community denies it's going on. (M laughs). And the school knows it's going on but isn't able to address it.

M: Isn't able to address it – you're absolutely right.

S: So in some ways it's an empty area. It's not really voiced. It doesn't exist on any agenda really?

M: Is it the curriculum that disallows the schools from addressing it? I don't know what it is? I think the school thinks our responsibility is mainly academic and that is all we can cope with.

S: It works very hard on pastoral care, it just knows that in a sense it's completing in a wider society where those issues are not really recognised?

M: In [this school] we spend about 50% of our time dealing with pastoral issues, I mean it's unending.

S: So you must be quite exhausted?

M: (laughs). As you can see.

S: So do you enjoy teaching though?

M: I do but next year I am going to work three days a week, which I think I will enjoy more. At the moment I am not.

S: Also, you suggested that there are many things that you would like to do but there's not the time because of SATS etc. I mean, within the National Curriculum what elements do you think are useful or are just demanding?

M: Initially, it was so very open ended that it was very difficult. Now with more structured schemes of work things are becoming easier for the teacher; not thinking about the pupils or the community. They do have tokenistic bits on ESN or equal opps but the book is so thick that all you're interested in is on finding out what you have to teach. You're not worried about the ESN and SEN about it ... I've lost the question...

S: I just wondered what elements you found were useful and which you just found hard work?

M: I think there are things that we as teachers would have done anyway without the literacy hour and numeracy hour. But in some ways the numeracy hour does give a very clear structure to your Maths. But not so much the literacy hour, it's too bitty and it takes too many things on.

END

INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER X (JUNE 2000)

S: What I want to ask you first is what you want to contribute to the lives of your children as their teacher? And you can define learning as you like.

X: What do I want to contribute in terms of being a teacher in terms of literacy or generally?

S: Generally.

X: I want to give them a sense of independence and be able to get on by themselves and use the knowledge and skills that they've got and apply them to various situations that they are going to come across in their lives. To give them loads of advice and practical information. Not just focusing on the core subjects, although I know that teaching now is all numeracy and all literacy and that's fine but it doesn't help the children with life skills; to get on with other people and communicate effectively with each other. And I think my role as a teacher is to help them communicate their ideas and feelings and aspirations to get what they want in a co-operative way. Especially in a school like [this] where competitiveness is avoided because of the nature of the children themselves.

S: The nature of the children?

X: I mean at [this school] we do get a lot of children who have extreme behaviour. So we tend not to do competitive things with them although they learn such a lot playing competitive games. We do sharing activities – so just to give them life skills would be ...

S: When you say life skills you mentioned a whole range of skills to do with communication ...um...

X: I mean they would be the ones I would focus on: the communication; being able to vocalise what they want; being able to write down what they want; being able to communicate their feelings in lots of different ways and then looking at behaviour in terms of getting what they want. Which I don't think is something people focus on so much now because of the emphasis on numeracy and literacy and possibly in the very near future the emphasis that science will have as well.

S: When you mention that children have particular needs; can you be more specific about why or who, what sort of needs?

X: There are all sorts of needs. I mean a lot of children who come to [this school] come from very difficult backgrounds. They come from single parent families; they come from families where there is not a lot of money; they come from families where for one reason or another the children are under a lot of pressure to grow up more quickly than they should do and those sorts of things are related to how children related to each other; how they relate to adults; how they relate to work. We also have a lot of children who have been excluded from other schools.

S: Really?

X: Mmm

S: When you mentioned that list it didn't seem to incorporate English as a second language or South Asian children... Do they fall into the problem area as well?

X: Yes. As a school we have a section 11 (well they're not called section 11 any more- they're called EMAS or EMAG teachers) in our budget because we've got so many English as a second Language (ESL) children and so many Afro Caribbean children in our school, that we have somebody who works with the children for quite a large part of the week actually but the work is mainly focused on numeracy and literacy and mainly focused on the Afro Caribbean children.

S: Not for South Asians?

X: Not particularly no- and there doesn't seem to be any concern about putting into place any structures or systems to help children with problems that children might come across in terms of their academia- children who have ESL. There doesn't seem to be any concern with the school that it needs to be in place from when the children come in and follow them through the school. The emphasis seems to be on years 5and 6. And I think this is a lot due to the fact that schools are now very, very target driven and to get our SATS results up we target those children in years 5and 6. But the emphasis this year seems to be on um – I quote, "disaffected black children".

S: Ooh that's very ...

X: Mmm.

S: Sounds a bit denigrating – or it might appear to? *(X laughs* sarcastically*).*

X: Absolutely.

S: You've mentioned the National Curriculum literacy and Maths or numeracy as if it's quite different from these other skills that you would like to teach the children? How do you find working with the National Curiculum?

X: I find it on a personal level very, very difficult because the way in which we have to teach now is that we have to cover certain things at certain times. Our work is already created for us. It's not coming from the children. I mean as a teacher, as a professional we are making assessments about the children all the time. Because there is a need to deliver this part of the National Curriculum, that part of the National Curriculum in terms of numeracy and literacy; you can always address the things that the children are having difficulty with within the strategy that the Government has developed. For you to address those needs what they say is that it's like a rolling programme so that every year or very term you come back to visit these things and there is the opportunity for you to do that. But for me as a teacher it makes more sense for me to address the issues as soon as you become aware of it. So that for instance if the children are working on grammar or grammar within a sentence and they're having difficulty with that; there is no point leaving it until next term – you have to address it there and then. But because of the constraints or the strategies you can't because you're constantly thinking in the back of your mind – I can't do that because this week we're doing this and

next week we're doing that. So in terms of numeracy and literacy it's actually quite difficult.

S: Do you mean in some ways you're not able to apply it to the specific needs of that particular group of children you are working with? It's like it's almost written separately from them?

X: It is. It is because what you've got is you've got the National Curriculum and then you've got your strategy for numeracy and literacy, which is separate from the National Curriculum but that is actually what you teach from. And so yes it's very difficult because so much time is spent on numeracy and literacy and it doesn't focus on children with ESL. It's very difficult for those children because they get more and more panicked because as a teacher you just do not have the time. The class sizes are so big and we have mixed age ranges in our classes and so the strategy is such that you can only divide your curriculum in three ways. Which means there are a whole load of children in the class for whom this work is just not appropriate.

S: Basically what you're saying is that there is not time to just adjust and adapt to what you sense as a teacher is appropriate or suitable. And you've mentioned ESL – what sort of considerations as well as say linguistic might these children need/require?

X: Specifically children with ESL and their needs in terms of numeracy and literacy or do you mean in terms of the whole curriculum?

S: Well perhaps specifically first.

X: I mean I think that consideration needs to be given – when they formulated these strategies they were purely thinking about children who don't have ESL. I mean the text that they give you is already written down for you so that you have already got examples of the text written down for you and very few of the text come from other cultures. They're very, very Eurocentric, even in fact very, very British. And because the children work so hard in the morning in the afternoon when you want to address those issues it's very difficult for children to stay on board and to stay with you because they're so tired. I mean I think it has huge implications for those children who are not born in this country or whose parents were not born in the country. Because what it gives you is that it gives you a very good grounding in English and the history of the English language and things like that, but it doesn't actually help you if you don't understand the basics.

S: So it's to do with a lack of knowledge – a certain section of knowledge? Is it possibly to do with a sense of identification that would assist or otherwise? What's your opinion about that?

X: I mean I think generally that primary school education in England does not help children who are not White to identify with the curriculum. Because when you think about other areas of the curriculum – science or like history; for instance if you take what we are supposed to do with the Victorians it has absolutely no relevance or bearing for children who are not White. It's all very White.

S: Are you able to adapt it?

X: I do – but you are not expected to. So when I teach (I am not a year 5 and 6 teacher any more) but when I teach I always talk about colonialism and the empire and things like that. It's all about the Industrial Revolution but from a British point of view and those sorts of things so we are not making use of the resources we have in our communities.

S: There's two things there. One of those is that I was going to ask you about the wider issues for children who have ESL in the wider curriculum rather than just English and Maths. But also...(*thinks community*) no...if you can answer that one first that would be best. You know the wider concerns?

X: I mean when they break down the stats for the children who took SATS last year. The children who do most poorly are those who have ESL. And that has got to tell you something about the curriculum and the way in which that curriculum is delivered. Why is it that it is those children who are doing so badly and also another group of children who are doing very poorly are black boys. This is the reason for the targeting for the young disaffected black boys but there isn't any targeting of ESL. Maybe because in the early nineties and late eighties the focus was much more on children with ESL, so it's shifted...

S: To do with behaviour – it sounds like it?

X: Yes very much so. So – I mean it's not helpful for the child who has ESL; it doesn't value their culture. It doesn't help us as teachers or respect the ways in which we used to teach – to make use of the resources available as a community because we have things at [the LEA centre], which have been set up by section 11, by EMAG teachers which are absolutely brilliant. But there is actually no time to get these things in.

S: Is the pressure to do with the tests? Can you give me some idea about what you feel about the tests?

X: It is very, very test orientated. What's happened in our school is that the children in year 6 have to sit the SATS. But what they do now is they sit the optional tests for year 3,4, and 5. So when the year 6 get tested everyone else in the school is being tested. So it's a very, very test driven situation, everyone...

S: It must affect the atmosphere?

X: It does affect the atmosphere because it affects how you teach because what you do is that you are teaching to a test. You know that these things are going to turn up and that is what you teach to, because with performance related pay and all of these things that are coming in now – your salary is linked to how your children do. So it's going to compound the situation even more and make things even worse. So children in ESL are going to really suffer, black children are going to suffer.

S: It's as if you are competing.

X: Yes.

S: You've got your interests focused on being an achieving teacher – fitting in with those requirements and you are aware of another agenda for another group of children/people whose needs can't really be met in the same way.

And the other thing I wonder about is what do you actually feel about Ofsted – their assessment?

X: I don't really know but I mean Ofsted should in an ideal world be a really, really useful tool for a school to move forward with, but in reality it's not.

S: So why is that?

X: I don't know because it's such a political thing and I think what you have to take into consideration is how your local authority have done when they were Ofsteded and I think that they [this area] came across quite badly in Ofsted in terms of supporting education etc. ..Teachers are under so much pressure during that Ofsted week. You just don't have ...I mean we specifically asked for a multicultural team when we had our Ofsted and we didn't get that. We got a team from Birmingham, I mean I think they were from Birmingham but there were no Black people on the team; there didn't seem to be any particular awareness of Black issues. And although as a school we'd already identified the things that were going to come up; that Ofsted were going to bring up and Ofsted were going to say we'd need to deal with...

S: What sort of things?

X: They were mainly to do with special needs – so again they would be to do with children with ESL.

S: Can you clarify what particular things they would be?

X: I mean I can't quite remember because it was such a long time ago – I mean we were Ofsteded about four years ago now.

S: Don't worry.

X: Our Head seems to be under the impression that we are going to have another one in the last part of the summer term.

S: Do you think that the tests have more of a wider impact than the Ofsted report? Or what...

X: I think so, because the tests are done on yearly basis and you're only Ofsteded every four years unless you've got a particular problem with your school. I think the tests are a better indicator. But then it matters how the tests are themselves constructed and what they're actually looking for as well.

S: Because Ofsted seems quite generous in terms of things like pastoral care in terms of its assessments. I was wondering whose needs are you trying to meet? You've got the parents and their concerns about what they want for their children- which do you think is going to interest them most?

X: I think the thing that interests them most - Ofsted the most – is how a school is doing in its tests.

S: It is actually going to come out...

X: Yes, because it's competitive and it's data..

S; That is hard crunching...

X: Yes that is right.

S: It's accessible.

X: It's accessible and there's a mass of data and in terms of asking questions of the parents. Ofsted have to ask questions of the parents and they have to have meetings with parents but at a school like [this one]; where we don't have a lot of parent participation, you know they never get to know the views of the parents.

S: Yes – that might be quite a good thing to move on to. Which is: What about the parents- about the South Asian parents in particular- what are your impressions of the South Asian parents? What is your knowledge of them?

X: Not a lot of knowledge to be honest with you. When we have parents evenings the parents that are least likely to turn up are the Asian parents.

S: Have you got any idea why this may be?

X: I think it's to do with the fact that schools and educational institutions are not welcoming places for people who don't feel secure about their own ability to communicate.

S: So it's to do with language – is that what you are saying?

X: I think it's to do with communication. You know we have one person in our school, who isn't a member of our staff, who comes from EMAG, who does translation for us. One person for a school of 400 pupils which is not a good situation because parents are not going to come and sit in front of you and talk about their children because they don't have a grasp of the language. And it's not an ideal situation to have the child translate for you.

S: When you talk about [this] community – the South Asian parents in ... – what knowledge do you have about that part of the community?

X: Very little to be honest with you. It's quite – I mean the Asian community is mainly made up of Muslim people; there are a few Sikhs and even fewer Hindus. Um.. I know that the majority of people are Bangladeshi ahh..and that is probably the extent of my knowledge.

S: From your own knowledge – mean coming from a South Asian background – and also the limited knowledge you have of the South Asian community in [this area]– what do you consider might be their priorities?

(Pause)

X: I mean I can't speak for any body else apart from myself and my experience but as an Asian parent my priority would be that my children had fair and equal access to the curriculum.

S: Within the curriculum is there any priority?

X: I would want my children to do well in literature and numeracy because they are the things that are going to be looked at for the whole of their lives.

S: And do you think that the South Asian parents focus on those things as well?

X: I don't know. I mean I'm thinking about my children at the moment who have got special educational needs; who are Asian and their educational needs are not related to behaviour, they are related to literacy and numeracy. And I have close contact with those parents and it's only two out of thirty-six. But the impression that I get is that it doesn't really matter; they are young children it makes no difference. I think it's dependent on the age of the children.

S: Somebody's indicated before that perhaps they are more focused on a more traditional/old fashioned view of education: expect children to do homework and to do the 3Rs and whatever you consider the more obvious aspects of the curriculum are; perhaps not so much consideration for other aspects of the curriculum? Do you get that impression at all?

X: I'm teaching years 3 and 4 at the moment and you don't get that impression with that particular group of children but when you teach older children you do – the emphasis for these parents are really on the tests.

S: So they're quite happy with the tests?

X: I think they are relatively happy with the testing and they want their children to do well in the tests. Because you find that they are the parents who are happy to get in extra tuition and make sure their children go to homework club or whatever because I think they put a certain value on passing exams.

S: What about things like the Arts?

X: I don't think that there is much concern for the Arts.

S: Why do you think that might be?

X: I don't know, I don't know. I can only speak for my own experience of growing up and you know I was always told that your exams are really important. That kind of knowledge can't be taken away from you and that things like Art and things like drama are not going to get you jobs.

S: I can see that, but also in terms of pastoral care and religion – how do you think that works with the Asian community?

X: I mean that ...is a really good school in terms of helping children to develop in cultural ways. We're very, very good at getting a good balance between Christianity and all the other religions. Although the focus has changed since we've had a new person whose come on to the management team and whose come with very, very, very, strong ideas about religion and Christianity; more focusing on Christianity than on any other religions.

S: Mmm I remember you saying this some time ago ...

X: Umm. We do make sure that what we do in terms of equal opps; in terms of religion gives them a balance despite the fact that we don't have many Hindu children – we do work on Hinduism.

S: Are you aware of any extra curricular sort of dimensions or activities after school that the South Asian community involve themselves in?

X: No. We do have a South Asian parents group that involve themselves in activities during the school day and it's on a Thursday. And I think that's something set up by the community and also by EMAG for parents who've got ESL but it's mainly focusing on KS1 children. What happens is that the parents come in and they make books with their children or they make games with their children. It's really to develop the parents' language which is really, really wonderful, it's really good but the school is saying that we may not have the resources to be able to offer this next year.

S: But also in terms of the pastoral care in the community; you know the religion input in the community, are you aware of that?

X: No. No not really, no. I mean; before I left for my maternity cover we did a little topic about the families; we did. People were asked to come in but only certain people and it wasn't a balance of all the religions.

S: What sort of people? Were they representative of all the different..

X: No, no.

S: ...groups?

X: Not necessarily.

S: So why were they coming in?

X: To tell the children about families and about religion.

S: It was to do with that!

X: Mmm.

S: Did you have someone from the Islamic community?

X: No.

S: Not from the Islamic community?

X: No.

S: And you don't know why that is – was it a community thing or a school thing?

X: It might well have been the school.

S: The school?

X: It might well have been the school – yeh. It's really up with equal opps and that. But I think what happened was that they made use of all the resources

that were in the school and because we don't have any Asian parents who volunteer to do anything within the school-um..

S: So none of the parents have engaged in the school?

X: No, not really. They don't come in and offer their skills and that's not for want of being asked.

S: So you feel quite separate then?

X: Yes.

S: Like you live in separate worlds and have separate agendas?

X: Yeh, yeh.

S: Because the other thing is that when I was reading something by I think it was Jill Thomas; she gives a type of appraisal of types of attitudes towards parents by schools and gives three options. One was 'school focused' which involves getting parents to help with fund raising and expecting them to be on the governing body. Another was 'curriculum focused' which involves helping/ expecting parents to help with homework and in the classroom. And the third was 'parent focused' where parents are seen as primary educators and given support and knowledge of the school because they're seen to be part of a corresponding – the link between the primary and secondary socialisation process. Where do you think your school would place its attitudes towards the parents- I suppose the Asian parents?

X: I think the middle one.

S: They would be expecting them to help with the homework and possibly if lucky in the classroom? But their own agenda; I mean as far as I can work out the South Asian community has quite a large agenda of its own - for its children. I wondered if you were aware of that – that's quite separate from the school.

X: Mmm.

S: In terms of Islam and things ..

X: Mmm. I mean I know that a lot of the children do go to school after they've finished with us. They start school at five o'clock or something and they study the Koran and I know that starts at a very young age. I am aware of that. But in terms of asking parents to be on our governing body and to have a voice about what's being delivered at school and how it's being delivered; you don't get people and it's not for want of trying. Because we've always got spaces available on our management committee to/for people and in the whole time since I've been at [this school]; we've only had two Asian people ... But it's like anything else ... it's very, very cliquey. So you know if you already feel threatened; you are not going to put yourself into a position where you feel even more vulnerable; where you are going to be the only voice that is saying – you don't want to put yourself in that position.

S: So you become the spokesperson?

X: That's right.

S: Rather than just a participant.

X: That's right.

S: You have the whole community that you represent just by being there.

X: Mmmm and that 's a lot of pressure on you. And there's a lot of commitment; there's a lot of time and if you do decide that you want to be a governor then it's all down to you. You are the employer.

S: So if you're talking also about things you mentioned; like the resources of the community, that the school is really unable to attend to because of the target driven nature of the National Curriculum. In terms of the community itself do you think there are issues that the children face because of these two different worlds?

X: Mmm.

S: And the community – and although you're not perhaps conversant with the concerns of the community because you suggested if I'm right in saying that it's a bit cliquey, it keeps to itself – so it's not very easy to get into.

X: Mmm and that's in terms of the White community and the Asian community and the Black community – they all do keep very much to themselves.

S: All of them?

X: Yes.

S: Do you think that is typical of [this area] particularly?

X: I don't know if it's typical of [this area], it might be typical of [the larger area].

S: This separation?

X: Yeh.

S: But you don't know why?

X: I mean it might be to do with the original housing policy that ... had.

S: And on the other hand – do you think/are you aware of the children being caught up in any clashes, priorities- different priorities?

X: No because what I've seen, as a teacher is that the children work hard when they're in school um...

S: You're talking about South Asian children?

X: Yes – they work hard when they're in school, dedicated and they're focused and then they've got to do it all again when they go home. And they see it – I don't know but I presume that they see it as two very separate things that don't mingle with each other and school is one thing and home is another

thing. And it's like that for a lot of children and it doesn't matter about their cultural background.

S: They just separate off?

X: Yes.

S: They switch codes or whatever?

X: Mmm

S: And there's no issues that arise in the playground – that draw attention to any problem?

(Pause)

X: Sometimes there are but very rarely

S: I mean there was a situation, which had recently occurred – that's why I heard about it. Where some Muslim children had been quite aggressive to a fairly naïve loud mouthed West Indian child who had provoked/teased the name of Allah inadvertently – I mean teasing about a child's name like Mohammed and they became very aggressive – quite frighteningly so – this little gang. So it seemed they were quite...

X: Mmmm I mean children being children I'm sure there are incidents when these times do occur but when you actually talk to the children you discover that nine times out of ten it turns out to be something else. But because [this school] is so stringent in making sure that we follow our policies and are so good at delivering equal opps, and see other people as being equal. And you know when its time for Ramadan children are given a different space you know, they don't have to go out to play. All of those things are taken into consideration and are seen as being normal. So Muslim children are not seen as different children or for whatever reasons certain children get withdrawn from certain assemblies no big deal is made of it and so we don't come across these problems. But I know in the [local] community it is quite apparent. But what children do in their own time it's something as a teacher you don't have the time.

S: When you're saying- what sort of things are you implying?

X: Just obvious things like how Black children and Asian children relate to each other when they're outside.

S: How do they?

X: They don't get on very well.

S: And that's Black and Asian rather than Black and White?

X: Yes because I think what happens is that Black children feel more of an alliance with White children. And the Asian children are seen as separate and it's the age-old thing that you run the shops and are segregated.

S: So there's quite a typical stereotypical perspective in the community?

X: Yes I think so because when you look at the housing and see how housing is arranged it is very distinct. You know like very near the school a lot of White children live and a bit further away is where the majority of Asian people live. So you look at how they're spaced out.

S: Do you think the school could address these issues if it didn't have pressures.

X: No I don't think it would. I mean I know the school is supposed to be an extension of the community but it's not within the school's remit. I do understand that there are all sorts of value systems..

S: And that you are doing as much as you can.

X: Yes that's it, that's as much as you can do as a school and the rest of it is up to the community.

S: Well what do you think about the community in terms of – ah – what do you think about the parents' evenings? How important do you think it is for them to turn up?

X: It's exceedingly important because at the end of the day they'll send an older sibling to turn up and when you've got something to say to the parents about the children 's education you don't really want to be giving the message to an older sibling. You want to give the message to the parent so that you know the message is clear and that it's got there and really sometimes in some families the only opportunity you've got to see parents is twice a year. And they're important [meetings] because they tell the parents how the children are getting on, what is to be done, what areas the children are lacking in, what areas they're doing really well in. Um so it is important that they come. And it's important to get their opinions about what they think is going well and what is not going well. Children go home and they talk about their education and they say things about school so it's another way of gauging how the children are getting on as well and you don't get that with Asian children. That's something that you really, really miss out on.

S: So it's like two separate worlds, basically that remain separate?

X: Mmm.

S: Do you think that will change. I mean do you think this is a permanent situation?

X: I don't whether it will change.

S: I mean because you've got children becoming parents who have been educated in this way.

X: Educated in this way – that's right.

S: Speaking English as well. Because they won't be ESL any more.

X: What I've found is that they leave [this area]...But there will be that drip feeding effect where you will have people that will stay who've been through the state system and who were born here – who understand the value of

going in and communicating with schools. But it all depends upon what sort of an impression they have had as well. Because that has a very big impact on whether you want to go in and discuss issues.

S: Yeh..So do you think they'll be still caught up in the community system which will separate them? I mean as far as you know what would the priorities for a South Asian community be – where would their real focus be?

X: I think it would probably be a religious bias.

S: And what would that involve do you think – did you have a religious upbringing?

X: No I didn't. It's just from what I have seen of the children that I've taught who've gone on to secondary. *(pause)* I mean I think to make sure that they know about their religion and to make sure that they know about the implications of the, their religion and how their religion can help them to do what they want to do in their lives. I mean it really does seem to be very, you know, very religious based and people will give children the opportunity to spend a lot of time out of school to do Arabic exams – to do – that and they don't seem to attach much value to the state education system.

S: So they've got a priority for their own religion?

X: For their own issues.

S: Issues?

X: That's right.

S: And that incorporate another language and maintaining that. And what about different cultures; are you aware of different cultures among the different Muslim groups?

X: Umm

S: Or even Sikh?

X: It's funny you know because we did a topic on India, and all the South Asian children wanted to talk about was not India. India had absolutely no relevance at all. What they wanted to talk about was the Punjab and Pakistan.

S: So they wanted to talk about specific geographical areas that they originated from – their roots as it were?

X: Mmmm.

S: So that would imply that this process of identification is quite vibrant for them?

X: Mmmm

S: So important.

X: Absolutely, but when you think that ...

S: But it's not religious then? Would religion be embodied in these geographical areas?

X: I think the main focus is religion.

S: But then within that?

X: And then within that it's where they actually come from. So people can come from India – they don't want to know about people who come from India. What they want to know about is people who come from Pakistan and they want to know about the Punjab – which is perfectly natural.

S: So they have roots there. And do they go back there?

X: A lot of children do. They take a lot of time out of school. A lot of our children are out of school three months at a time and their parents just expect their children to pick up where they left off. Which makes it very, very difficult for those particular children.

S: And do you think there is a way of accommodating that? Or what do you feel about that?

X: What do I feel about that? As a teacher I feel it's wrong.

S: To take three months out?

X: And I think that um..you know. I mean that if it was me and I was a parent I'd make sure that – you need resources to do these things- but I would make sure that my kids would go back and visit their cultural home every year, every two years but I mean go during the school holiday times so that they wouldn't miss out on their education here. But what it shows you as a teacher is that maybe the state education is not valued as much as, as the education they are giving their children when they go to India or when they go to Pakistan, or wherever they are going for that period of time. But you find it is only the Asian parents that are withdrawing their children for that period of time.

S: It sounds as if there is quite a complex agenda that is going on that is valued in terms of priorities and also that the school has set up as well.

X: Mmmm.

S: But it's difficult for you and me coming from quite sort of – Anglo – backgrounds to um- do you think there might be something important in that?

X: I really don't know. I really do not know; because on the one hand they want their children to do really, really well. They want their children to get 'A' grades and to go to universities – they want their children to be professionals and at the same time they're not prepared to put the input in themselves. The input comes from older siblings who have been through the educational system; who know – you know – who'll say 'I'll help you with your homework – this is what you need to do'.

S: And it's just tokenism for the parents?

X: I don't know whether it's just tokenism from the parents. I mean I don't ah ah – it's just such a complex issue – it's like they want their children to have an English education but that's it.

S: So you're saying it's just a very specific part of that education?

X: That's just a supposition you know because there is so much more value attached to learning about the Koran, about Hadj, about all of those things. And it's only the Muslim community I'm talking about because that's my only terms of reference in terms of [this school].

S: What about the Sikh community?

X: The Sikh community is a very strong community. But because the Muslim community is so much larger within our school that's what you notice more and it does seem to be very much sort of - you will educate our children for us. We don't need to have anything to do with you apart from the fact that we will send our children to be educated by you during the day.

S: So it does seem to be ...I mean can you remember when..rather – when they were talking about the Punjab or Pakistan; when they got excited what were the issues that came out of that, what were the things that interested them?

X: They were political issues to do with when Pakistan was first born.

S: So it was to do with the Partition and with the Punjab?

X: Umm...I think the one thing that a couple of Asian Sikh children in my class were really interested in was the Temple at Amritsar.

S: Ah – right.

X: So it was to do with religion again. But it's funny you know - like from out of the mouths of babes – it's just really...you know the political issues to do with the British leaving or to do with the Hindustani people, Pakistani people and the divide is still so strong and amongst children that are just seven years old.

S: Yeh, so do you think that corresponds – I mean that there are those tensions in the community?

X: I think so – there's tensions in the community – Yeh – I don't think they're...

S: Voiced?

X: I don't know whether they're voiced. When you have a look at [this area]– what you've got is you've got [a local group] which is a resource for all the members to the community and then you have all the Bangladeshi things.

S: You are not aware of any Pakistani ones?

X: No- you know Bangladeshi help centres – the – actually they have just recently opened up that Islamic religious- well no it's not religious – it's like an Islamic study centre.

S: Mmm. Well they do have about three Mosques – they definitely have two and they do have the Pakistani women's centre. Also I get the impression that the Pakistani community is larger but that it's more diverse and it's less co-ordinated.

X: Quite possibly yes. I couldn't comment on that but there doesn't seem to be everything seems to be organised towards the Muslim religion and not so much Sikhs and not so much Hindus.

S: Yes, I have heard about Hindus definitely.

X: Well I think there's one Sikh temple.

S: Yeh, and there's about three along the ...road – any way I do know there's a whole lot of Gurdwaras but they're outside [this area] for some reason.

X: Yeh, and there's only one in [this area] and they've recently done ti up.

S: But I do get the impression – I mean I don't know how long you have been teaching in [this area] but do you think the South Asian community is quite strong or resilient?

X: I think it's quite strong and resilient. I mean they've been there for some time and they've definitely made their mark.

S: And are you suggesting – like you were suggesting the other day – that it would be quite different if I went to Southall or places like that?

X: Yes – it's very insular, it's very small and it's very unwelcoming.

S: So as a representative of a South Asian person in the teaching body of [this school] – how do you think they see you? Are you aware of identifying with them?

X: Um – some of my parents will say that they're so pleased. I mean that at least they do have an Asian member of staff and that it's good that I taught their kids and all those sorts of things but at the same time because you see so few of them – you don't really know.

S: No – so on one level you're saying that when they're actually aware and they're actually pleased but you're not clear about...

X: Mmmm, yes it's just another black face.

S: So it's somehow a link.. So it's almost like they feel quite foreign.

X: Mmm

S: And it's like you make it feel like there's a link with the community but in a real sense that's as far as it goes?

X: Yes that is as far as it goes because there isn't that exchange or there isn't that communication. You know if I've taught a sibling and the parents know me but I don't think they see me as an Asian person. I think they see me as part of the establishment.

S: And do you see yourself as an Asian person?

(Pause)

X: What in terms of being a teacher?

S: Well umm..

X: Because in terms of being a teacher – yes.

S: When you are put in that position you feel Asian as opposed to ..

X: Other members of staff – yes..

S: But if you were putting yourself up against a more general ...

X: As a professional, as a teacher I would be fighting for the rights of Black children because that is what I believe in. And not because they are Asian or because they're Caribbean or Nigerian; but because I am the only Black permanent member of staff within a huge school.

S: And what do you think those issues are?

X: Equal access to the curriculum.

S: When you say equal access?

X: What I mean is, is that the information the information is given to the children in a way that values their cultures – rather than giving than a Eurocentric point of view.

S: Right, so that would be your agenda as a representative Black member of staff. But you feel that...

X: I feel very different to the Asian community. I don't feel part of the Asian community- I don't feel I'm welcomed as part of the Asian community. So as an individual – no I don't feel part of the Asian community.

S: And you wouldn't want to be?

X: No I wouldn't want to be because it's not open enough. I mean because I suppose like so many things in life there are so many hidden agendas and there are too many...

S: What do you think those hidden agendas might be?

X: I really don't know.

S: Do you just sense them?

X: Yes I do just sense them and to be honest with you I'm not prepared to vocalise on tape what I feel they are *(we both laugh)* even though it's anonymous. Um but those views have come from how I've been brought up as well and what I've experienced in my life as a Black person.

S: Right so – are they things that you feel are ---a bit not positive?

X: They aren't positive no.

S: Right – so that would just reinforce a sort of stereotype thing?

X: Yeh, yeh ----I mean I don't find the Asian community a particularly welcoming community..

S: It's interesting because having the time; being in a different position as a researcher who liaises and is not really caught up with one group or another; and for quite a prolonged period of time manages to create certain links with certain individuals; it's quite revealing when you go into their houses and you get treated as somebody who's trusted (tho' as you know I don't know any more or speak any more – probably know less then you do about Asian communities *(X laughs)* or even you know their issues). But when you do go into those houses there are some quite moving things about it. And you do see it a less estranged – you don't feel so estranged from it. I mean OK they can't enforce things upon me that they might want to enforce upon their children . .. If we went back there then- what sort of things do you think that an Asian parent would want to encourage their children to achieve?

X: Generally to do well and to get a good job.

S: And you suggest this religious component?

X: Yup. To not forget where they come from and to not forget about their religious roots.

S: Do you think it's quite complex though – I mean ...

X: I think it's very complex.

S: In terms of their cultures?

X: *(sighs)* Well I can only speak from my experience with my parents and *(pause)* you know there wasn't any notion about mixing with other people umm. They wanted to keep it in the family as it were. I think the Asian communities anywhere...

S: Even in places like Southall?

X: Yes that's right or Bradford or wherever you look because I think people feel that they need the support of their own communities.

S: I am just wondering as well – this is a whole other dimension- but because those communities have a root in a geographical place in another part of the world whether that might strengthen the connection rather than if it's more uncertain-...although before the Jewish population had a space called Israel they were still very concerned about their own particular identity and worked quite hard - I was wondering whether the West Indian community is more integrated into the White community?

X: The West Indian community?

S: Yes you suggested that they might mix more with the White population?

X: I think they do – I think that because may be culturally they are maybe more similar.

S: Yes there is a PhD student who comes from the Caribbean and he said that he was aware of what a difference religion made. Because the South Asian religion comes from the East and it's still quite strong. Whereas they have a form of Christianity (West Indians) and in some ways that has watered down their separate identity.

X: I think it might well have something to do with as I said earlier – you know housing policies and where they originally housed people.

S: Right.

X: Um because people tend to stay in those places as well. I think it's who – it's also to do with how old these populations are within the community as well. Because the West Indian – the African population is a lot older than the Asian population in [this area].

S: But it sounds as if there's not any great opening to integrate.

X: Nope.

S: So though it's younger it's also got a feeling that it's more involved in its own priorities – which are religious. Do you think there is a different attitude to discipline?

X: I don't know. I mean I think that again speaking from my own experience that Asian parents are much more strict.

S: I mean that's what you hear.

X: Are not as giving than other populations of parents possibly?

(pause)

S: I suppose it all reinforces the idea that unless people have the time to actually mix or force themselves into different places – which is the privileged position of being a researcher – you really do end up with very separate worlds don't you?

X: Mmmm.

S: Subtleties and complexities can't be reached.

X: That's right absolutely.

S: And the school itself seems to have quite a complex agenda of its own.

X: Mmmm.

S: Where those complexities – so what is – this agenda? I suppose the National Curriculum focuses on the community; says that this community needs to be incorporated into or liaising with it – what do you think the reality is, I mean how necessary is it?

X: I don't think that the National Curriculum is saying you need to make links with the community. I mean I think as a school part of your job as a school is to make links with the community. But the document itself is just what you have to teach and it bears no relevance to – because it's a national document – it bears no relevance to particular schools.

S: So there's not a particular time set out to find out what those particular concerns may be?

X: No.

S: So they don't become uncovered. I mean one of the things that someone else said to me is that even the SEN or various equal opps parts of the National Curriculum are too bulky in themselves – so complex that under pressure as a teacher you just pick up the key things that you have to do. *(laugh).*

X: That's absolutely it – and what it boils down to by the end of the day is, is time constraints because what you've got is you've got your hour of literacy; your hour of numeracy and how many hours are the children in school altogether? And then you've got an hour for lunch and then you have to deliver this part – so I don't know but it depends upon how you are with the children in the classroom as to what you decide to deliver. So there is that little bit of freedom that if you come upon a particular issue in your classroom that you will address that at any such time. But it doesn't give you that time to go into any depth – in a way that you used to be able to.

S: Or even to reflect upon what you'd like to do – it's what you have to do?

X: That's right and this is why it's a national document and you as a school are lumped in with everyone else in the country to meet particular targets which have no relevance to developing children; and you know, making them aware that we live in a world that is made up of all these different cultures; and we have to respect everybody in their different ways for their different beliefs. There is no time in the curriculum.

S: So you feel that that's just what's said but not really able to implement?

X: No. You're not able to do it effectively. There is just not enough time.

S: So when you're actually teaching what do you focus on? What do you end up focusing on yourself?

X: Well I deliver the curriculum – what I have to deliver and then like I said if issues come up in the classroom; if we're having a discussion about something and issues come up then I will deal with those; I will make time to do that. And what suffers is my art work.

S: Ah right.

X: So; if I decide that some things happened for instance there's been some major international um- mishap – I will – and the children come in and they say to me 'Miss did you see all those children dying in Rwanda or did you see that fighting in Pakistan or ... I will talk about it with them. And we'll do work on it and we'll look at the history etc. But what that means is that something else in the curriculum has to be dropped.

S: You prioritise things, which may link them with the rest of the world – with their extended identity almost?

X: Mmm.

S: Do you think that is your agenda or do you think it's one that relates to the community's needs?

X: I don't know if it relates to the community's needs. It's my own personal thing because I think that like I said in the beginning; your job as a teacher is being able to give those children communication skills and to understand where these things come from. And I think it's very important that they do understand that there is a wider world out there and that things happen and that people don't like each other for certain reasons and people do like each other for certain reasons.

S: But you as a person have actually left parts of your South Asian background? You've actually chosen to take on other perspectives? Or other ways of educating your child or children? Um – how have you managed to do that?

X: Because being brought up in a really small family unit with no extended family or anything that's the frame of reference that I had and not overly religious – that's where it's come from – my childhood..

S: Circumstances? But it might have been different if you'd come from an extended Asian community?

X: It might well have been different.

S: But you chose to – what seems to be implied here is that if you'd come from a particular community as opposed to your family, which was quite separated; those particular values that you've rejected might have been more rooted in the community and made it more to do with different relationships, which might have made it more complex?

X: I don't know. I don't think so because I think that my job as a educator is to be a facilitator and I don't think that any sort of.. *(pause).* I mean I think a lot of it has got to do with being born in England and like seeing the injustices that happen to Black people all around the world and seeing how hard Black people in Britain have had to fight to just – to make little steps forward. That if I was going to root things in a particular culture; that I would be just reinforcing all those stereotypes and not being able to move anybody forward which. .. I mean my philosophy about education and about life is not about that. It's about breaking down those barriers. It's about saying to people yeh OK. I know that you have really strong feelings about this and really strong feelings about that but you still need to move forward; which doesn't mean you have to sacrifice any of the views that you have. But what you do need to do is to understand that there are other views as well. You know like yours

might be right for you but they might not be right for somebody else. And I think that's come from being born here and seeing how hard it is for Black people.

S: Um. I can see that and I can also see how- luckily. I'm interested in your movements, your interpretations and upbringing and what you've done with them and how you've brought them into their own for yourself – personalise them. Because I get the impression that as - you do – that the Asian community is very closed but there is within that some very interesting individuals- quite powerful in their own right who are quite divergent – more subtle than others. It's not that feeling that there is no movement – there is just this tension about those people staying and whether the community can accept that movement or whether it's going to maintain itself and feeling relatively positively about its complexity but aware that it's not very accessible.

X: And it's not made accessible because I mean that you've had the opportunity to go and to do this whereas the majority of people aren't. So if the Asian community was a bit more open it might be easier for people to get a better understanding.

X: It does seem to be a major concern. I suppose for me I came from a background which was more aware of the issues that you've drawn upon. Like the issues of being a black person and fighting for your identity – I think that is the case; but being curious about and looking at the complex and diverse way in which that Black identity is manifest. There is a whole range of identities that are fighting for their own space and it's sort of getting to know what those agendas are and wishing that there was a greater sense of awareness with the National Curriculum of these resources – of these community resources. Rather than just having to relate it to – not just – to the political world and issues on the news but in fact it's also going on in the community. But in fact it's not accessible – because there is not the time. There's not the time and it might also be because it's too close to the bone. Discussing world issues with children is very different from discussing – um- religious fervour within particular ethnic communities.

S: You're hoping that the children will make those links themselves?

X: Absolutely because it's not my job.

S: No I know it's not. I'm just saying you're saying to them that's the way to reflect.

X: Yes that because that's the way I teach. I mean we're not going to talk about opportunities that Muslim women get within [this area] today but what we are going to talk about today is how women deal with these issues across the world; how Hindustani women do it, how Muslim women do it. So yes it is like focusing in on particular issues.

S: Cos you're aware that you could be offending them or stepping on their territory?

X: Yes absolutely.

S: There is an awareness; you are working with something instinctively?

X; It is something instinctive because that's all it can be because there is this lack of communication from the local community. Nobody ever comes to me or the head or to the deputy and says within [this area] we are having real...

S: *(S interrupts)* It's a sort of trial and error when you do put something forward?

X: Mmm cos where it comes from originally, it comes from the children and there must be some reason why it comes from the children because they've seen it on the news and there's been some discussion at home about it.

S: So you are linking in somehow? ..... Well thank you. Is there anything else you would like to mention in terms of my concerns really which are to do with where the community – South Asian parents and the school link up?

X: I mean I think it's a really, really sad situation that we don't try more ways of encouraging Asian parents to come in and be part of the school you know. And a lot of it is down to the fact that we don't have time. But you know other schools can do it – you know other schools have found strategies of encouraging parents to come in and getting to help their children with their homework. As a teacher the overriding impression you get is that they don't really care about day today things and but what they do care about is what marks did my child get in his tests.

S: They're not interested?

X: They're not interested in the 'how' they're just interested in what did they get bit.

S: The end product – not the process?

X: Not the process.

S: And you're talking about South Asians.

X: I am, I am and I think that is quite sad but it's also a fault of the school for not making the school more welcoming.

S: It's also a fault of the National Curriculum?

X: I do think it's a fault of the National Curriculum but then we, as teachers don't have the power to do anything at all.

S: So you don't want to have this niggling dissatisfaction. It's just better to get on and do what you can do?

X: Yes I do but I do feel as a school we could do a lot better to invite people on the management committee to, on to the P.T.A but all of these things are run by a clique of maybe half a dozen White parents – it's very exclusive and they don't allow other people to come in.

S: Well also last time [in the first pilot interview] you suggested to me there was that issue of having P.T.As at times when in fact people are at the Mosque praying – so it clashes in a very obvious way.

X: Yes, that's right and we're not making any of those considerations as a school.

S: And in some ways if you did make those considerations where would be the reward as it were?

X: Well it would mean that as a school you would be able to use a resource that is really, really rich.

S: Would it affect your status in terms of the assessments that are going on in the wider country?

X: Well it might mean that children who have ESL do better.

S: Right so that is an issue. So there's an agenda there saying children with ESL have got issues that are not quite clear; that are not really being addressed but the NC is really not giving space for quite a few things including that – which is a bit nebulous?

X: But if you had a voice on the management committee it would make it easier to know what those considerations / issues were.

END

APPENDIX FIVE: INTERVIEWS WITH INTERVIEWEES

B1:Bangladeshi spokesperson:
(who was originally RB1see appendix one) and S: (researcher).

(Read out introduction).

S: OK is that alright?

B1: Yes.

S: So just to start off; could you tell me what it's like to be a Bangladeshi?

B1: (laughs)

S: I know it takes a few minutes – to think about it. What springs to mind?

B1: – it's quite difficult – um what does it feel like to be a Bangladeshi - in Bangladesh or in this country?

S: In this country.

B1: Um (laughs again)

S: Oh right in the deep end perhaps we'll come back to that ...sorry I though it might be easier obviously too large.

B1: Oh what does it feel like – it's not as though I was a Chinese person and suddenly I jumped...

S: Uprooted.

B1: ...to being a Bangladeshi I mean - I've always been born and brought up as a Bangladeshi so - it's great I suppose. Um..

S: Well what do you think might be the concerns of the community about being Bangladeshi I mean what sort of things arise that are distinctive – what issues?

B1: No not particularly I mean may be someone who has difficulties living in this country maybe they'd have things to say about it ...but for me I haven't got problem as such and as for being a Bangladeshi I love it

S: Oh that's great

B1: Just been born and brought up –like I say so I don't know otherwise. I see the way the English live and obviously we can't join in because our culture is so different

S: That's not a problem for you though?

B1: That's not a problem for me but you know what they're like; they go clubbing they go to the pub, and although I speak the language it is a barrier because being a Muslim you can't go to pubs and you can't go to night-clubs. You can't have boyfriends.

S: It's very clear...

B1: I know a lot of people who do but...

S: You like you keep up this order?

B1: Mmm yes – I like being a Bangladeshi, I'm proud of it.

S: No that's fine and to be a Muslim does that make any difference?

B1: Yes that makes a difference –like if I was a Bangladeshi and not a Muslim I could mix in more. I mean not just with English I mean England is multicultural – you have Somalians; you have this, you have that....if I wasn't a Muslim .I could mix more - like some people say it doesn't restrict you but in a way it does because ...say it's a child's party and child's birthday party and you go in and say it's a summer's day and you see all these parents and they're there like in these tee-shirts ...

S: Looking light.

B1: Looking light and like we would have to be fully covered...and they don't say anything but they must think – gosh you must be hot!

(Both laugh).

B1: They don't have to say it but you can just guess ...

S: I don't know ... I don't know that's what they think ...it's just intriguing you know...

B1: Cos if I was a nursery nurse I just came in with sleeveless dress on a hot day and I saw this women coming in all covered I'd think gosh she must be hot underneath all that...

S: Well I think we – I mean as a westerner you don't define yourself so much by your clothes but you're actually making a statement by your clothes?

B1: No I don't actually know, nobody's come to me and said what I'm saying but you do feel different.

S: Yeh:

B1: But you do feel different[with your clothes] that's your personal thing.

S: And do you think that affects the children I mean how do you think that the children deal with that that sense of difference?

B1: Um ...from my point of view when I was younger it did matter because when I went to school I'd be really embarrassed. It's changed, life in this country has changed so much as to when I was younger. Nowadays you see so many Asians and ...

S: And you stuck out?

B1: Whereas before I used to go to a primary school where I was the only Asian girl I was the only Asian, whereas now if you go there you'd see twenty/thirty Asian parents, not necessarily Bengali but Chinese, Asian, Black. Whereas there were no Black children, there were all White children and I was the only Asian there.

S: So do you think it's easier now?

B1: It is easier now, much easier. I mean my mum used to go there in her sari, you know her bright sari and used to see her a mile off. But if there were other parents there at the time, you know five or ten then I think she's not the only one. It used to be embarrassing, no one ever said anything to me but I used to feel embarrassed.

S: Self-conscious?

B1: Yeh whereas now it's not like that.

S: But now do you think now that parents expect their children to more easily wear traditional clothes?

B1: Yeh

S: But d'you think that parents may also be more lenient just because they've lived in the country longer?

B1: Whereas before, when I was younger like going back to my experience, up until I was thirteen or fourteen I used to wear western clothes all the time. Then when I was about twelve/thirteen when I was in secondary school, I'd come and my mum would nag me to get changed – she'd say get out of that trousers and skirt and wear Shalwar Kameez.. I'm thinking if I have a daughter when she grows up, I won't nag her. I mean as long as she is dressed appropriately. I mean I won't let her wear a mini skirt.
If she reaches the age of thirteen/ fourteen I won't want her to wear a skirt because like I said because....

S: Too exposed?

B1: Because Islam says you are not supposed to wear a skirt. So having said that I won't let her show her legs. Because when they're children up to about twelve I let her but after that I'll let her wear long skirts, I'll let her wear shirts with long sleeves, I'll let her wear trousers – I won't nag at her.

S: Right so there are some quite considerable changes?

B1: I won't nag at her. Whereas my mother...

S: Didn't realise how uncomfortable...?

B1: She'd say get out of those trousers OK fair enough when I was at school but even when I worked at the bank and I had to wear uniform she used to say you ought to be wearing Shalwar Kameez and you know. And you know if I had to go down the road to get a pint of milk or you know to the off licence I'd be really embarrassed in case somebody sees me. Whereas now so many people go around in Shalwar Kameezes it just doesn't matter. Yesterday I

went to IKEA and there was two white women and they had these long trousers on and it was like a Kameez but three quarter length and that looked alright.

S: I know I was going to buy a long shirt today because it just feels nice. And also although you say it's hot it's also very cool; you know in Bangladesh ...

B1: It is, it is, you know like it's this thing inside you; you feel different.

S: Yeh, yeh – it's a huge thing...

B1: But a lot of people do understand and they won't say anything.

S: Things have changed?

B1: Things have changed much more, because if you go to a nursery school because it's more mixed these days I'm sure a lot of the White children come out into the playground and see Asian parents with saris and things like that; so they're used to it. But when I was at school I'm sure children used to ask questions to their parents why is it that that women is wearing things like that – because they're not used to seeing. So things are changing.

S: Yeh, that sounds good. Now what I was going to ask you now was issues around education in terms of, um – 'what do you think are the most important things in terms of a child's education?'

B1: Most important things? Parents are important part of the children's education because going back quite a few years children weren't able to support their children.

S: Parents?

B1: Parents weren't able to support their children because they had this language barrier they couldn't read themselves; they were illiterate, they couldn't read or write so how could they teach their child anything. And like when the word education comes up the majority of people think like school, college. Education is in the home, I mean you know everywhere. Education means learning and they can learn at school they can learn everywhere. Whereas before parents weren't able to support their children.

S: So now you feel they can help more at home?

B1: Yeh they...

S: So would they help with homework?

B1: Yes, yes I mean the new generation they can...

S: Still in between a bit?

B1: Yes, when my children –it is still in between a bit; it hasn't changed totally.

S: So in terms of the Mosque – you know a lot of the children go to the Mosque to learn Arabic and...

B1: Yes they do.

S: And to read the Koran. Are you aware of any difference between the sort of education that goes on in the Mosque and the sort of education that goes on in the school?

B1: Yes, to be honest education is improving a lot more these days when it comes to English or Arabic or whatever. I was talking about it in the house the other day with my parents. I mean going back about twenty/ thirty years ago when like our parents were like, and my grandparents and great grand parents. They didn't encourage their children to like learn; like they'd send their children to Mosque to teach them the basics like you have to read the Koran and you have to pray five times a day and when Ramadan came that you'd have to fast and that's it. But they wouldn't encourage their children; when the times of prayer came they didn't say oh it's prayer time now – go and do your prayers; they wouldn't they just didn't bother. OK I've sent you to the Mosque you know your stuff that's it. Whereas now parents do say – you know because you have to do prayers five times a day... I see with my mum; she'll say; it's time to do prayer and you know when somebody says something to you it gives you that extra ... I mean I probably wouldn't have noticed that that time was seven o'clock. And when someone says it; you have to go and do it. You can't get away with it...

S: Mmm but are you aware of different ways in which they teach? Because in a sense they do teach in the Mosque don't they?

B1: Yeh it's much more calmer whereas before you know what Arabic teachers used to do – you know a Sura is like a couple of words, like a poem. So you know you can't learn something in one day. Say if a Sura was this long and it had a few verses I mean not every one is that intelligent. I mean you might be cleverer; you might learn that in one day, whereas it may take someone else a week to memorise that and the teacher would be really strict and say gosh ...

S: Why can't you?

B1: Why can't you? look so and so can do it in one day why can't you? It 's been over a week it's been two weeks. Whereas now the teachers are less pressured. You know go with the flow. Take it easy. And if the teachers are like that then the children feel less pressured as well and feel more willing to learn. Whereas before when the teachers used to pressure the children the children used to go well I'm thick then aren't I. It's in their minds. I mean when I used to go to the Mosque there was this one girl and she couldn't learn anything and the teacher would be really, really strict with her and he used to really tell her off.

S: It used to make it worse?

B1: And say you're really thick. Come on, all the girls of your age they've read the Koran and they've gone on and you're still learning your suras. And she would be like...

S: Frozen?

B1: Yeh because she was worrying about all those other things; she wasn't really concentrating on her work.

S: Are the children allowed- can they ask questions about what it means?

B1: Yes, yes they are most welcome to –and they do get um sessions.

S: To have things explained a bit?

B1: Yes.

S: Because that must be quite difficult because they're encouraged in the school to ask questions ...

B1: They do; they do.

S: Oh that's good. So what d'you think um not just in terms of education but in general terms what do you think are the most important things that a child must acquire to become a successful person?

B1: Um (pause) – can you read that again?

S: It is a difficult question – I mean you can define it as you feel – I mean the words. But what do you feel are the most important things that a children must acquire to become a successful person?

B1: Well from a Bengali point of view?

S: Yeh.

B1: Well my parents they um – they thought of education obviously.

S: What in school – education in school?

B1: School; manners, good manners. Um respect.

S: Right –respect what?

B1: Respect everyone really, respect the Elders, especially the Elders because like I said Bengali culture is different.

S: Mmm, yes I know...

B1: Say for instance – I mean in your culture it's probably different but...

S: Well I'm not actually very caught up with ...

B1: You're not caught up with it!

S: I don't feel strongly about defending anything like that at all.

B1: Say for instance you were my older sister or my auntie and you were older than me and you were sat there and that we only had one spare chair but then my mum and dad came in or my auntie and uncle came in; I would

automatically jump out of my chair and give them my chair. Whereas some of the children from the younger generation nowadays are lacking in that...

S: They resist?

B1: They do.

S: Or they're not even aware of it?

B1: Or they're not even aware of it. I mean I've got a sister and she's nineteen and when it comes to things like that she does not think at all. Like the other day she was sat on the sofa with her legs up and she was watching the telly. And my auntie called in, two of my aunties and my older brother they walked in. And because my mum's house is like the living room and the dinning room is like one big room. So you have the living...

S: I think you have it in quite a few houses now- I've got it.

B1: It's the new houses.

S: I like it.

B1: It's like an L shape and you have the living room there and the dining room. But when my aunties came in and my uncle came in they all sat round the dining room table and they were just chatting about things and that but my mum noticed that my sister was there and that she didn't take her legs down. She didn't say anything in front of the relatives but after they went she had a right go at her.

S: Yes.

B1: She said my sisters came and my brother came and you had your legs on the sofa and my sister said well they didn't come round here. Like if they were sat round here I would have and my mum said that is not the point. That is not the point; that is not the point. They could see you over there with your legs and you didn't respect...

S: So there are very distinct codes of behaviours?

B1: Yes so ...

S: Perhaps if she was in a different environment, like if she went on to a social environment outside – she could do that and nobody would mind. Bur then she has to respect that when she comes home there is a set of rules that she has to really observe. So those things are important?

B1: They are very important... Like the other day my mother went to Birmingham to see a bride from Bangladesh for one of my cousins and that like. I don't know it depends on the family – like that family was really open and as soon as they went in; this girl – the girl, the girl they went to see, the bride to be - she came downstairs and she was chatting to my mum and she was chatting to the groom himself and she made coffee and tea and she was just like as a normal person would do. But you know and she didn't think anything of it and her mother didn't think anything of it and her sister didn't and even like a couple of hours later when my mum and my cousin were coming back she

actually went to the car and waved goodbye. And my mum came out of the car and she says I've never seen a girl like that in my entire life. Just as well we didn't like her; even if we did I'd have said no - who wants a girl like that; she showed no respect and no...

S: And what was your reaction to that?

B1: And I said mum what did you expect? What were you expecting – so I asked her and she said - yeh you know obvious we want to see the girl, but what we wanted was her to come into the living room for say half an hour or so and if we wanted to ask her any questions she should have answered them and she wasn't really blaming the girl. It was the mother she was blaming.

S: Yes I know I've heard that it gets passed down to the mother...

B1: She said yes the mother should have told her that -she shouldn't have been jumping around...She wasn't really jumping around she was just going backwards and forwards.

S: She should have deferred to them more?

B1: My mum was saying that she should have told her daughter how to behave. That she – you know we'd seen her and then she should have stayed away from the lime light she shouldn't have been so close.

S: it's difficult...

B1: She came into the living room several times you know one minute she was bringing drinks and next she was bringing coffee.

S: But she thought she was being friendly. ..

B1: Yes she thought she was just being friendly. Whereas as I could accept if I went to see this girl you know I wouldn't have thought anything of it. But my mum she did. She was saying just as well we didn't like her.

S: Do you think it might have also been possibly that you've been to Bangladesh that you're aware of these customs more?

B1: Yeh, yeh.

S: Because they are more clearer there. Whereas I should think there are more Bangladeshis that mix half and half with the western communities as well and society and they sort of adapt ideas more and so it gets more confusing about what you should and shouldn't be doing in some way. Compared to in Bangladesh where it is much clearer. Well I noticed it's more orderly out there in terms of what people are expected to do. And I was terribly worried about doing something wrong. (S laughs).

B1: I mean when my child grows up I won't ask – I mean I know about western culture as well as Bangladeshi and Islamic culture. I mean when my son grows up whatever happens I want him to have a bit of all that. I wouldn't let him totally out of my hands like an English mother does when they're sixteen and they are welcome to do whatever they like - no I will have a set of rules for him as well.

S: So why do you, what do think is important about this order? I'm not questioning it from where I'm coming from – I just have to ask that question so that you can clarify why it's important.

B1: D'you know if you have these set of rules, children respect you and they respect their elders and you have a much more sort of um...

S: Straight forward?

B1: Yes – whereas I have seen a few Bengali families who you know let their children do what they want and then they can't control these children. Because –these children go up the wall they just ... they don't know what to do with themselves. They go and try drugs, they sleep with girls and go to nightclubs and you know because they think oh wow you know my mum doesn't say anything so why not? They try to do too much in a short time. And that's bad for them ...

S: Mmm for everybody, for them as well...

B1: Whereas I think if you have this set of rules it does...

S: Give some sort of guidelines?

B1: Guidelines yeh.

S: And then you can mix with your own group more easily because you know what they expect. So also in terms of um – ah – I mean also these Bangladeshi customs about how to behave – also do they link in with the Muslim ones or are they quite different?

B1: No it is quite similar.

S: So it's sort of things like the respect you talked about?

B1: Yes Islam says you should respect your elders and our prophet Mohammed always respected elders and said you shouldn't go any where without - like if you have a mum you should go with her and you should respect her.

S: Yes I've heard that from the children...

B1: And you should whatever you know and it says that paradise lies between the feet of your mother and you should always respect her. Take care of her ...

S: So it's like the most important thing in your life in some ways?

B1: Even before your father.

S: Yeh I've heard that.

B1: Like I think somebody asked a question like who should you respect and it was mother and then who should you respect after the mother and then it was mother again and then after two or three times it was then the father. So you know your mother is the most ...

S: Yes and is it the mother important or is the father important in terms of the education at home? For either the teachings of the Koran – as a back up or for school education, or home education? Is there a role that either of them play more in the education of the child?

B1: Um well I think both parents should have a role not just the one. But what happens with our Bengali people is that all the fathers' work, 90% of the fathers are at work in the evenings (laughs).

S: Oh right so that sorts that one out.

B1: They go to work at five o'clock and they come sort of midnight or one o'clock in the morning – ah way past the child's bedtime and when a child comes home from school – they are so tired and they sit in front of the telly until Neighbours has finished. And the majority of the homes do that don't they? They sit in front of the telly, watch the cartoons and whatever, watch Blue Peter. After Blue Peter they watch whatever, Neighbours or whatever. After that they turn the telly off and get up to do whatever they have to do. If it's homework they get on with that but then anyway by the time they've finished the fathers have already gone. (laughs).

S: Right so they're not there anyway.

B1: And 70% of the mothers don't really know any English so they can't really help much. (laughs).

S: It's hard isn't it?

B1: I do think they do have a tough time – Bengali children have a tough time at home. The only time they don't is like when they have older brothers and sisters who know English.

S: Do you think the fathers would if it was at a different time – do you think they'd go into the schools.

B1: Yes more fathers would because more fathers do know a little more English than the mothers. I think they would have helped their children if they were at home.

S: Do you think that that they'd go to school if it was in the morning – you know they have parents' evenings.

B1: Yeh you know like I say 90% of them can't go because they're at work.

S: I know it's such a big thing and it comes up again and again.

B1: Again and again.

S: So what sort of work it is that they might go to for working in those hours five till twelve or one?

B1: The fathers they work in restaurants, in take-a-ways.

S: Ah yes of course ...

B1: Catering.

S: I just have to keep those things in mind because I'm always being asked by different people – what happens to the Asian parents in terms of coming to parents' evenings?
But obviously if they're not at home and the mother alone and is responsible ..

B1: And the mother can't speak so what's the point ..

S: No, it's a huge thing.

B1: Even if the mother could go she can't speak English – so how can she go – it's not worth her going because she won't understand a word they say.

S: But that's also going to change gradually?

B1: Gradually it's going to change as ...you know the younger generation when they have children they can give their children more time. Plus the boys, the men the younger generation they're getting work in like English places – not factories- you know industries and um like offices.

S: Which are in the day-time.

B1: Yes daytime jobs rather than evening jobs, which will give them more time to have with their children. Because you know 80% of those who graduated last year have not gone into the catering industry they've gone into...

S: So that is a change – quite an important change. But what do you think are the most important things in terms of school education – from what you understand of it?

B1: What's important?

S: Yeh.

B1: Um (pause). Oh when our children go to school they just learn about the western things like whether it's history or whether it's English it's all to do with like western culture; nothing to do with like Bangladeshi culture. I mean you have religion in R.E. but that's not enough for a child. So I reckon that there should be more sessions where children learn about different cultures – not just Bangladeshi. As I said they do have R.E but that is so short – such a small area that children just don't learn about it. And if the children were taught more about these cultures – even the White children they would respect these cultures more – I think that is ... I mean if an English child knew in depth the values and how important a culture is to them say Bangladeshi, or Indian or Pakistani or whatever then they can respect these issues you know.

S: Rather than it just being strange and different?

B1: Yeh because um like – when I was working in the Bank and they'd be somebody's birthday or somebody was leaving and they'd go over tot the pub to celebrate and they'd ask me to go ...

S: It must have been quite strange...

B1: And I'd say no. Because when I first started out I didn't like saying – I didn't open up and I pretended I had things. You know the reason I couldn't go there was because I was going to the chemist or I had to go to the dentist lunchtime – you know make up various little excuses. And about six or seven months went past and there was about forty staff and so two or three times a week they'd go to the pub you know celebrating and then I thought no I'm not going to hide it any longer. I am going to chat to them I'm going to say to them why you know I can't go. They were all adults – they're not children there. They're all adults. I said to them one day – I said look the reason I can't go is because you know my culture says I can't; my um religion says I can't, my religion forbids me to go to the pub and drink I mean that is totally out. They were so understanding you wouldn't believe it. And then if they had ... birthday party or whatever – they'd buy me sandwiches or ...

S: That's really lovely – so that was just ignorance ...

B1: And once they realised that the reason I can't go and they'd say to me like – oh if it was someone's birthday – they'd say you know I'm going to the pub tomorrow but I do feel sorry that you can't go what would you like something – like I'd buy you something – and they'd say yeh - if you'd go to the pub I'd buy you a drink but because you're not going I'll buy you something – what do you want – a can of coke or you know or you choose whatever. And you'd say no and they'd say no, no I insist or even a fresh cream cake or whatever. And it was fine you know – from them on – I wouldn't get hassled – it wasn't really hassled but they'd say come on you know we 're going to the pub tomorrow. Or they taught that from an earlier age because um what they teach you now is like Muslims have to pray five times a day and they have to read the Koran. But that's as far as they go into it and they have a prophet called Mohammed and that's it. Because I did R.E at school and it was like that's it. And you don't know much about it but if they told them that a Muslim girl has to cover her head; she has to wear appropriate dressing that has to go to ankles and has to cover her arms and they're not allowed to drink at all – it's haram for them to drink. That they can't enter pubs – then they would know even at school. They would know I was a Muslim but they didn't know what my cultures were and what my limits weren't. They...

S: And then you have to always explain

B1: ...and you have this thing about explaining, explaining, explaining. But if they knew there and then they would understand that she isn't able to go to the pub and things like that.

S: So I mean following through from that do you think there are things that children have to face in terms of their identity or their experience?

B1: Yeh everyone has to; everyone has to – I'd say 80% have to face this and ...

S: It is quite difficult.

B1: It is quite difficult. I mean my brother's about eighteen at the moment and the other day somebody asked him to – there's this special thing going on at this night club and they asked him to go and obviously he can't go. But instead of explaining to these children why he can't go he just said that he had something else on. And we were like – cos it's not often he sits at home, he's

usually playing basket ball or playing with his friends and we were like R what are you doin' at home? And he was like no nothing but then we said you're never home. And then he said well my friends are off to the night club.

S: But in another way – he seemed – was he quite happy with...?

B1: Oh yes.

S: But he was just trying to make his friends aware of...

B1: Ah well the thing is that if they already known; they wouldn't have even asked him. They would have sympathised with him. And said we're going and we are sorry you can't come but we would have liked you to maybe some other time we'll go somewhere...

S: But it does put quite a lot of onus on having a good family – on having a secure family. Because if you can't mix – go socialising with some of the other groups outside – you know what teenagers are like when they have peer groups – well in England they do. And then if they don't have a good relationship at home or there's tensions for whatever reasons it must be quite difficult not to want to go out. You know and to have to stay at home on that level must be quite difficult.

B1: No I mean the majority of the Bangladeshi children get on really well with their families.

S: Yes, yes that dose come across.

B1: They could stay in all evenings and not get bored.

S: What do you think it is about the families that make them successful?

B1: Um love, respect, care – I mean I know when I say that you're going to think a White mother gives love and ...

S: No. no I'm not, not necessarily at all.

B1: If I said that to any one they'd probably think that and you know. Or if a white lady was sat here she'd think well I give my child love and attention – I give you know this and that but - um – it is so different Sophia – it is really different. Um like say for instance if a White mother gives birth to a child and then when the child's a couple of days old she considers leaving this child with the father or with a babysitter and she'll be off to keep fit classes. She'll say I have to have this day away from my child – I have to. They do I mean I've heard them saying: I've got to go away and I have to have a few hours to myself.

S: So the sense of self is different?

B1: And a Bengali mother would never say that – they would never say that – oh I have to have a couple of hours to myself or I have to have a couple of hours away from my baby. A Bengali mother would never say that I mean there is not a single parent that would say that. They're there for the child, they'll always, and they'll never say that.

S: Which reminds then how – if there's so much respect - I mean I like the sound of it for mothers- what happens if a woman doesn't grow up and become a mother or she doesn't give birth? Does she have quite a hard time in terms of her identity?

B1: She doesn't have a hard time – everyone feels sorry for her, the person who you know hasn't become a mother. They respect her, like for instance you were my older sister you never had a child, you'd never conceived and I had three children and they were teenagers and you had grey hair and you were seventy or eighty years old I'd still respect you because you're my older sister.

S: So the eldest has that sort of position.

B1: And you'll always be my older sister. Just because I've got teenage children doesn't mean I'm any more superior. No, no, no you'll still be the elder and you'll still be respected. Though people will feel sorry for you – my mother will feel sorry for you and say oh God my daughter hasn't got a child but you'll still receive that same amount of respect as you would if you'd had children. It's just like you're going to miss out from a mother's point of view- you're not going to get this. Because your child brings happiness you know. He or she brings happiness to you.

S; Oh yes...

B1: Whereas you're the only one whose going to loose out. You and your husband and think if I had a child maybe it would have done this may be I would have done that. I mean you're going to miss out from that direction – but respect from everyone else will still happen.

S: So um that's fine you've answered a lot of the questions, luckily I haven't had to be too you know one, two – it's just flown in from one thing to the next. But um what do you think are the most challenging things that the community faces?

B1: Bangladeshi community?

S: Mmm.

B1: The most challenging thing – now – I think it's the language because you know that it is a challenge because they're lacking it, they can't do much.

S: It's quite a few generations – I mean quite a few years until the young people become more acquainted.

B1: But I mean having said that you know a lot of our Asians tend to go back home – you know tend to get married and bring partners over and when that happens your back to square one. Because the well – OK nowadays a least one partner will know English. You know I seen this lady the other day and she took her four year old to infant school and um the teacher said something and she didn't understand and she ran home. Luckily she lives just across the road from her school. And she said to her husband the teacher said something to me it must be urgent; we better give her a ring and find out what she said. So obviously the husband rang the school straight away because the mother was really scared and she was frantic and ...

S: She panicked.

B1: She panicked and because this four year old is too young too to take much notice of what the teacher was saying any way, yeh and she told her husband and her husband rang the school and so he said oh I'm the parent of so and so and the teacher said something to my wife but my wife doesn't understand English what is it? And because this father knew he could telephone but if he didn't know I don't know what would have happened. And he rang the school straight way and the teacher said oh nothing to worry about it, just that you provide sandwiches, packed lunch for your son but he doesn't eat any of it in school. You give him a – I've been following him for the last couple of days and he always has a drink, a bar of chocolate and sandwiches but the only thing your child ever eats is the bar of chocolate and nothing else. So maybe next time don't give him that bar of chocolate and he'll have his sandwiches. That's what she was trying to explain.

S: So it wasn't urgent.

B1: Oh no, no because the mother didn't understand because she was like following for a couple of days and she was seeing that the only thing this child will eat is the bar of chocolate and sometimes a bit of his drink.

S: What about the fact – is it mainly the women the women that come over here to get married or can it some times be a husband?

B1: Oh yeh there's many husbands.

S: It could be either and one of the couple will speak English?

B1: From now on it will be like that.

S: That will change things as well. So you think the language is the most important...

B1: Yes I think at the moment the language is – it is the most important one. Because if both the parents knew the language they wouldn't have this problem and they wouldn't feel like an outsider because a lot of the ladies today they feel like an outsider in this country. They've been in this country for like twenty years some for fifteen – they feel like an outsider. The reason they feel like an outsider is because of the language. If they knew the language they wouldn't have this problem.

S: Oh yes I think the way you speak makes a lot of difference, let alone whether you speak...

B1: I mean my mum when she speaks – I mean she's been in this country for almost twenty- five years almost but she doesn't speak a word of English and she'd say when she had my brother and sister in hospital. Of course all mother have their babies in hospital but she had my sister about twenty years ago now. And of course back in those days they'd keep the mothers in hospital for ten days.

S: Yes I know my mother used to love it apparently.

B1: She didn't, she didn't like the food, she didn't like the smell of the food, she couldn't eat the food, she couldn't talk to anyone she only used to say I think prison's much more interesting than what I go through. She goes: I just sit in my bed and do nothing and then you have this chair next to your bed and that's it. I couldn't even talk to the lady at the next bed.

S: It must be so isolating.

B1: And I'd see the ladies pulling the little trolleys, the baby prams into the nursery and um leave the baby there and go and watch telly or go and have tea and coffee with the other mothers. She'd say what 's the point? I mean I could see what they're doing with my eyes but I couldn't understand what they were saying and I couldn't ask them a question. What is the point?

S: It's a real barrier isn't it?

B1: Whereas you know when I had my child and I stayed in hospital for about three days I just loved it. Because the day after...

S: Free food and conversation ...

B1: Yeh, yeh ...

S: Sharing things.

B1: Yeh sharing was the most wonderful experience. Because I stayed in hospital for a day before my baby was born so I was there until night and I was asking all these mothers who had had babies like – what's it like giving birth? And they were telling various stories and this and that and I was like working myself up to it. You know when the time came. And after I did like my tummy wouldn't go in like my tummy was still out here the day after I'd had my bay. And d'you know the following day I went to the canteen and d'you know because I knew how to speak and probably because the nurses knew I could communicate with them, she said you know there are menus available with Halal food and you can like have chicken curry or whatever and she bought me this menu and it was like a proper menu. So I went to the canteen and I ordered my food and there was this Pakistani girl but she didn't know you know she could speak a little but not much but she hadn't go the courage to ask. But she's had a caesarean and been there for a week and she had to eat like salads and all that because she's a Muslim as well she couldn't like go and eat anything. She was eating salads. So I went up to her – like she was in the same room – and I said look the nurses just gave me another menu and she was like What ! I never knew so then we order our food. So when the nurse came she said your food ready now you can go and eat now and I went and this lady said – oh when's your baby due?! (S and B1 laugh). And then this conversation went from one to another and then two hours just went by and you know. And if that was my mum she wouldn't even go into the canteen. So this is the barrier. I mean that is the only barrier I can see to be honest. Because its your culture and that you can get away with [things]and you can explain to other people and when you do they respect that.

S: Well you feel they do in this area.

B1: They do, they do but it's the language. If you can't communicate with any one then you know...

S: And when parents send their children by the way that's just a final question but when they send their children to Bangladesh what do you think they hope their children will gain from the experience?

B1: If they take their children to Bangladesh they will learn more that um. One thing my sister learnt was the funniest thing. That like in this country a family – when we mean a family you think mum, dad and the brothers and sisters that is the family...

S: Nuclear family.

B1: So when we first went to Bangladesh and my sister was about four and this sort of question came because she was sent to school. She goes I know she was a bit small but she could see all the other children and she could learn – like she was just picking up English. So she goes she could pick up the language if nothing else. So she was sent to school and in Bangladesh as a four year old – in this country if you go to a primary school or you have to learn to read and write or learn your alphabet or whatever. But we stayed there for a year you see and at the end of the year she had to have this exam so there was this question at the end of the exam – what is a family. Because we were standing outside and she was asked...

S: Oh it was an oral question.

B1: Oh yes they can't read and write they're only four – it's all oral it's not writing.

S: Yes , yes it's an interesting question.

B1: She said [the teacher] what's the family? And she said my mum, my dad and she says my older sister and my older brother and my younger brother because that's us – just us. And the teacher kept saying yeh who else. And she kept saying there's nobody else – that's it I've only got one sister and two brothers and my mum and dad there's nobody else in my family, that's it. And they were like laughing because they knew she was from this country because the teachers, the two teachers they were like cracking up. And they said what about your grandma? And she's saying oh no, no it's only my brothers and sisters not my grandma. What about your granddad they said, and she said oh he's dead. And your aunties and uncles – oh no they've got their own houses and she wasn't thinking of the family in Bangladesh.

S: No that 's interesting.

B1: A family in Bangladesh consists of your aunties ...

S: Whether you live in the same house or not...

B1: Well in Bangladesh they often do.

S: So they're still people you go to visit regularly as well?

B1: Yes your uncles and aunties they're just like part of the family. And she's like no, no my uncle's got his own house and my aunty's got her own house or whatever. So they learn things like that.

S: And also I noticed that the children whom I talked to who've been to Bangladesh they came back with these fairy- stories or stories about witches and that but they came back with stories their grandmothers had told them or things like that. The richness of um ...

B1: Well the funny thing is – I mean the first time I went and like I said my sister went when she was four. And because my sister was quite tall for her age and my grandma sat ... well you know how it is – you've seen the houses in Bangladesh. I mean you've got the houses and you've got the front of the houses and you've got the trees and you don't hardly ever stay in the house your always out.

S: No and the weather is good...

B1: And my sister was playing and I sat next to my gran and we were sat on two little stools – they were like cane little stools and she was playing. And um my gran said I was about the age of your sister when I got married into this family and I was like wow gran you about five when you got married and she was like yeh I was about five when I got married. And I said d'you remember anything (B1 laughs) and she goes no. And I was going like how old was granddad then and she was like ah he must have been that age as well. Can you imagine (laughs) and I was like what did you do all day? And she was like I used to play with my dollies. (laughs). And that's amazing because that's a story for me to remember all my life and when my child grows up I'll tell him that story you know how my granma was about five and how she used to play with her dollies. You know if I didn't go to Bangladesh – my gran's dead now – she's been dead for the past five years – I wouldn't have heard these stories.

S: And there is something very exciting about learning about other cultures.

B1: Mmm you learn so much more going back – you know you've been. Even the weather – when somebody says it's hot, hot they don't understand. I mean you went in the winter season I mean you were lucky. If you go in the summer season – it's like as soon as you get out of the plane it's like you've jumped into an oven and the heat just hits your face and your body.

S: Yes, yes – no that's lovely, that's great.

THE END

B2: Bangladeshi member
(who was originally RB2 see appendix one) and S: (researcher).

S: So the first question can sometimes seem a bit of a leap so if you can't answer it that's fine. It is 'how would you describe what it's like to be a Bangladeshi?' What are the first things that come to your mind?

B2: Obviously the language and the way – the style that we live by. The things that we eat and how we behave with each other.

S: When you say how you behave with each other; what do you feel is different?

B2: Um we expect our children to listen to us and maybe stay in and not to go roaming around too much and we expect them to get on with their studies and respect their elders. I think they get a different picture outside of school – I mean outside of home. I mean Z my daughter she thinks life is only about going out with her friends and shopping and always watching TV all the time. (S & B2 laugh). And that 's not what I want for her. I want her to remember to read the Koran and do her namas. But she thinks all those things are not important.

S: At the moment she thinks that.

B2: Yes at the moment she thinks that.

S: No but those are quite clear things that's great. And you mentioned to read the Koran and to do her namas so the next question was actually – 'what is it like to be a Muslim?'

B2: In this country?

S: Yes it's going to be in this country isn't it.

B2: Well sometimes I feel it's a bit hard. I find it a bit difficult to mix at times. When I'm at work and people ask if I'd like to have a drink or go to the pub; because they know I am a Muslim that question doesn't always come – but you don't want them to ignore you. You do want them to ask you to come down to the pub because otherwise you feel like an outcaste (laughs).

S: Yes.

B2: So one day I didn't realised that they were doing that to me and after one meeting I was wondering where they all went and then I found them all down the pub. And I went in there because I needed some twenty pences for A and then I realised – yeh they've all been ignoring me and not asking me to come down to the pub - but I would have gone with them. I would have had orange juice.

S: Oh well that's nice.

B2: And I suddenly realised that they were treating me with kid gloves sort of thing. They don't like to swear in front of me.

S: So they're trying really hard?

B2: Yes but they're not treating me as one of them; they're treating me as something special and fragile or some thing.

S: But you haven't behaved in an especially fragile way. You've said that you were a Muslim at some point?

B2: Yeh no tried to laugh at their jokes and whatever. I've been to the Christmas party once one time. But they drink a bit –they do drink behave different.

S: So they just thought that you didn't like that sort of thing?

B2: And the next time was a bad experience because there was a comedian there who was making jokes about Asians and I was the only Asian person there and they felt really bad for me.

S: Well they probably felt a bit embarrassed actually and protective about...

B2: Yeh they were, they couldn't enjoy the party either after that.

S: Oh well that's fair enough.

B2: And I didn't go to the next party so...

S: So there's that feeling that you can feel excluded?

B2: Yes a bit distant – not with everybody but with some people.

S: Are you aware of anything about being Muslim and living in England apart from your personal experience?

B2: Oh some times that we don't get um – it's difficult. I mean if you want to do your namas on time there's no place to do it really... You'd have to come home unless you talk personally to your head teacher of that school; or your employer if you're at work if there's a place. Some people I know don't feel brave enough to do it so they just have to come home and do it.

S: No, because it's making a huge a statement isn't it?

B2: Yes; that's what A finds at work; he's got a special room and he takes time out to do namas. People wonder why he's doing it and why he's doing in front of a Muslim thing.

S: So it makes you quite self-conscious in a way that you wouldn't be if you were in a Muslim country.

B2: Yeh that's right.

S: Yes I found the Azan in Bangladesh really clear for people. There was a silence and it was very different.

B2: Yeh wearing a scarf whatever the weather. I should wear my scarf at work. And some schools you know; they don't allow them to wear a scarf, which is difficult for the parents and children. My uncle has been applying to all the primary schools in Manchester for his daughter and they just don't want to allow it. He said that he was going to apply to Ofsted and suddenly they allowed it.

S: So it's always having to pave the way. But what about at your work have you decided what you're doing about your clothes or do you ...

B2: I just wear longish type of clothes; loose.

S: Do you wear a head -scarf?

B2: Well recently I wouldn't wear a head-scarf because most of them are ladies.

S: Yes – so it feels quite safe anyway. Right so what do you think are the most important things in a child's education?

B2: Well I think parents have a big role to play to give guidance about rights and wrongs; for looking to the future and what's – why do you need education and um what it's about; having a degree to fall back on.

S: That's formal education in the schools.

B2: And if you talk about education – about how we're going to live out lives that's also from your religion as well isn't it...

S: Yeh because the next question was; ' what do you think are the most important things that a child must acquire to become a successful person'? So it relates to what you were talk...

B2: I think being able to talk about your problems; being honest – you need to have trust don't you between the people you know... Can I answer that question again later?

S: Yes sure – I'll try and remember. Because I also wondered, looking at another culture – you speak Bengali don't you a bit?

B2: Yes.

S: But mainly you speak English; so you're quite fluent with the English language and I was just wondering whether words instead of successful; which seems to work well in a western context because there are always words like successful bandied around. This isn't another question – you don't have to answer this any way- but whether you can think of another alternative word that within in your cultural context – that might be more appropriate then successful? (pause) – you can't think of any – I just wondered.
I'll have to just fish around – because it doesn't quite fit – it fits well with western concepts and not so much with eastern ones. So what do you think are the most important things in terms of their Muslim identity – the children's?

B2: Yeh well things like they need to read Arabic so that they can read the Koran. Because once you can read the Koran you'll be able to learn the verses that you need to know for namas. And then there's the sort of background about how we do certain customs. So that's how my dad sort of did it with me. He did read stories of the prophets and what they did and that gives a background and meaning to your life.

S: Right – so they're like parables almost.

B2: Yeh about how the previous prophets led their lives.

S: Yes because I heard a little about that from the children. But you've explained a bit more what it was about and they just came out with these stories. In your traditional family – I mean not necessarily for you personally – who's responsible for the education of the children in terms of gender?

B2: The dads are always pushing them to do better. It's always the mums who are responsible for making sure their children do their homework and dads don't really get involved with that.

S: With the nitty gritty?

B2: Yeh but it's always dads who are usually inspiring them to do better and that this is important. And telling them the history of Bangladesh and telling them what they did at school and university or whatever. Usually the men have gone to university not all. But things are changing.

S: So they are changing?

B2: Yeh.

S: But with you as a mother; you would actually expected to go through the homework with them?

B2: Mmm be there; make sure they've started their homework for a start (laughs).

S: Do the applied side more?

B2: Yeh because dads are not always able to help them.

S: No I know; some have to work night shifts. So are you aware of any different ways of teaching between the way the school and the Mosque teach – methods of teaching?

B2: I think in our – some of the teachers in the Mosque who have grown up in Bangladesh or Pakistan; there's a different culture there and they expect children to listen straight away; not answer back and if the children do answer back they'll be scolded may be even hit.

S: Yes I've heard that

B2: So children who've been brought up over here don't agree with that; they don't work well with that. I've often had to force Z to go there- to the Mosque and she's fought all the way. She's said I'm not going there; people hit you. So we had to talk with her teacher and explain that it's not like this in this country. They need everything explained to them – not forced down their throat or anything like that.

S: Oh that's good so what was his response to that?

B2: He had to take it very seriously. Yes because if any child had brought it up as a case of abuse –

S: No also in terms of keeping some enthusiasm going.

B2: I mean just recently someone we know – she's been born and brought up in India to teach dance to the girls but they just clashed terribly – I don't know if I should be saying this.

S: Who clashed?

B2: The girls and the lady.

S: Was she being too strict?

B2: Too strict yes at one point she said if you don't do what I say your – if you don't listen I'll have to scream.

S: Yes and they're not used to that. And I think the other thing possibly is – I'm just making a supposition- is that the Mosque is seen as a separate world which belongs to another culture and things like that and in that sense it's seen as not comparable with western culture. But a dance raises expectations of liberation in the west as expression ...

B2: Yes that's right.

S: ...so enforcing strictness in that sort of situation does exist I mean ballet teachers are very strict...?

B2: And if you're doing sort of classical dancing they're very strict as well.

S: So it might have been an unfortunate group that had different expectations?

B2: Yeh.

S: Yes it is difficult isn't it – that the unfortunate thing about working in small groups is that every individual situation stands out.

B2: No I think she used to – I think she expected everyone to ...

S: Was it resolved?

B2: ...to do what she wants and I think she has to take it seriously – she has to take it on.

S: Like the Mosque?

B2: Yeh not the girls; the teacher.

S: Yeh like the head teacher at the Mosque. Because some people have avoided this question or not said things as they are but others have, because one of the questions which is later on in fact is related to that because it's: 'What do you think are the most challenging things that your community faces? (pause) OK well forget about that now. OK what do you think are the issues that Asian parents may face in relation to their, I was going to say now in relation to what you were talking about, children and western society? I mean are there issues – I mean they do relate to the community as well

really. And to get an idea of things that might be changing that might not have been issues for you so much?

B2: Issues for the children that have grown up in the western world?

S: Yeh

B2: I don't know; I think children brought up in this country expect a lot of freedoms from their parents, like freedom of choice about who's going to be your partner, whether you get married or not and what kind of job you're going to get. A lot of parents are afraid of those things and they want more control over the children's lives but they have less and less control.

S: Do they have an opportunity to discuss that amongst themselves – the parents? Or do they keep it in the family?

B2: Well I'd like to think that they discussed it with their children. I mean children go to visit Bangladesh and come back married.

S: So whose business would that be – would that be the parents enforcing that?

B2: Yes because they don't want people to be different.

S: I mean is the community dealing with it differently from ten years ago? Have things changed at all?

B2: Well recently children have broken out; I don't know but somehow the families have got to deal with it you know. They've got to help them in their married life or not married life and to help them to find a different partner.

S; It's a sort of strange situation – well the way I read it now – is that when you were in a more transient situation in Manchester – is that where you were brought up?

B2: Yes.

S: -and there weren't so many Mosques and things weren't so established in terms of a Moslem community which is probably how things were in [this area] as well, you didn't have so much education – Islamic education. But now because these things have become more established there's become much more expectation

B2: Yes culture's become ..yes that's right

S: about reinforcement. And what's also happened is that the children are also dealing very much with the western culture as well.

B2: Yes.

S: I mean it feels like that to me – I mean there are very positive and negative sides to that as well – I don't...

B2: Well it's positive to be in an extended family – you know where everybody joins in to help each other and like at the moment I have to find somebody for

my brother. And I don't know why – he's quite an independent person but he's not chosen to...

S: They're huge decisions actually in life anyway.

B2: Yeh and I think he wants, he wants somebody who's Bengali or from a Muslim culture in Manchester. Um because people would be worried that with someone outside their culture; they would be worried that it wouldn't work or that there would be a clash.

S: Sometimes they might feel positively about having a back –up of a family who was actually, considered things on their behalf? I should think in an ideal situation parents are not just concerned about the right caste or group ...

B2: Oh yeh that comes in definitely.

S: But there's also concern about matching the right person a bit.

B2: Although sometimes my brother thinks that's all that we always think about where we come from and matching up with that - without looking at an ordinary person and that's it and some times he complains about that.

S: It's difficult isn't it; there's so much more expectation of choice.

B2: Yeh and also getting them to meet up is also very difficult because there' s not much choice in this country unless you go back to Bangladesh to choose somebody.

S: And there's quite a formality in the situation which you can't get so easily if you go to visit a family in Manchester or Birmingham?

B2: Yes that 's happened to my brother. They were expecting, he was visiting a family and they were dressed very formally, dressed up in a suit and things and he'll be joining him to say namas. But when he turned up he was a bit casual! (B2and S laugh) – I would say but they would say scruffy. (B2 and S) laugh. He thought they should meet him in his ordinariness – it's the wrong idea isn't it?...I tried to explain to him that they wanted to see him at his very best but he said they need to see me how I am every day – and he thought that would be really nice.

S: And they thought that was really disrespectful.

B2: Yeh I'm sure my auntie has a bad time and they'd have said you know he's not what we expected – you said that he was ...

S: It's a big misunderstanding.

B2: Yeh it's a big misunderstanding and um always going to namas. And my brother is, although he has been very religious in the past he's not exactly practising at the moment. And um he didn't want to lie about it so he said he didn't always go all the time to Mosque. And my aunties and uncles were saying come on go with them just show them that you're interested. And he wanted to be honest and straight.

S: Which is very admirable as well. Very confusing isn't it.

B2: Yeh.

S: Well those are things, which I think at least they're coming out. Because the other impression I get is that Bangladesh itself is changing. Dhaka isn't as Dhaka was ten years ago.

B2: No it's getting more western expectations – going for a holiday – nobody before had heard of going for a holiday.

S: I know that lovely area that...

B2: I never went for a holiday. My dad wouldn't even let me go on a day trip with the school. (B2 and S laugh).

S; I remember you mentioning that before actually.

B2: And if you think about holidays people only go to Bangladesh – that's their holiday.

S: So that 's a very different change. But what do you think are going to be things that are going to sustain the culture.

B2: Going back to Bangladesh is I think the main thing because otherwise you can't sort of refresh yourself and the kids; their language just becomes stilted in this country.
If they go to Bangladesh it'll just revive everything and freshen them up. If they experience the culture over there it seems more real. When you're over here it's just like um sort of secondary to your everyday way of life isn't it. So I used to think that Eid was not very important but now there's Mullanas and a few Mosques they work closer together in the community – in the same area it seems more real.

S: Less of a minority?

B2: Yes. We used to just stay at home and cook food and nobody would come and see you.

S: So now it's more social. I remember stories – I remember reading about the nineteen sixties where women would be isolated in this little house- it probably still happens a bit.- and they'd be there all day having lived in a big community.

B2: When they come to this country there's not that hustle and bustle they're used to like over there - people go out and see anybody they want – people are more indoors over here. And they're more private.

S: Yeh – they're more private and more unused to just sort of chatting. I did um notice that Z said that when she has Friday mornings at the Bangladesh centre more women come but they also come just to be there and chat to each other. They like that social – just any opportunity to just come and just have the security of your own space to chat in.

B2: It's better when Z is just on her own there – it's too crowded otherwise. Yes you feel a bit self - conscious without other women there.

S: That's what she suggested.

B2: Yes she was really worried when she had to go and work there.

S: But the other woman had been there before – she was there before.

B2: No E was there when they used to have another female worker there too. Now they have two men and only one woman.

S: Oh yes that's true.

B2: So that's why she felt she wasn't doing it right – and it's against the culture. And there used to be three because Sally was also the administrator.

S: Right so that is another change then. It must be quite nice as well for her on Fridays as well – as well as for the other women. Um – So if I was looking at the things that you've suggested – there are constantly decisions to be made about how much of the western culture to accept and how much to enforce in a more traditional way. Another question that I had in mind around that was how do you think those issues can be addressed?

B2: People at schools and places need to be more aware of our culture and what sort of things are important like why you have to wear the head scarf and maybe having access to a room to say namas. Maybe being able to have a day off on Eid day. Things like that so that people are more aware of that.

S: So that everybody else in the wider society is more aware of it and more respectful?

B2: And not so scared as if you're breathing down their throat.

S; Yes like you experienced at work. So that it's more part of our education. I mean if you go back to that education system ...

B2: I mean even at work if people tried to be more aware. Still if I ask for a day off for Eid people get a shock.

S: They don't expect it. So on one level they have this multi-cultural agenda but they're not actually applying it because they're not conversant with ...

B2: No I have to write a letter two weeks in advance and have to receive a letter back.

S: What about at the schools, what...

B2: I feel guilty for asking for a day off.

S: You have to be so self- conscious about these sort of things which normally would just be part of a way of life.

B2: In Bangladesh people just have a day off .

S: And you don't have to question it.

B2: Stand up for your rights!

S: But it does clarify things – because nobody else is aware then you have to be very clear about them. But in terms of the actual school because you mentioned the school in terms of the culture but what do you think the parents...

B2: Because there's a lot of Asians in this country they should learn about our history and Islam maybe. I mean some of the children do.

S; They do at ...because [my daughter]...

B2: And also because we're from the Indian subcontinent we wanted to know do they learn the history of places of Bangladesh and they don't.

S: No but somehow the children pick up on something – well actually they're very interested – there's definitely that interest.

B2: I'd like them to know more about that. I know when we asked that in school they've said no it's not part of the curriculum but we are doing it this year and we're specialising in Black history and things.

S; So what do you think might be the priorities of the school in terms of education – what do you think the school's actually looking for?

B2: How do you mean?

S: Or what's more important to them in terms of the education they have in the school – what do you think the teachers want?

B2: (long pause) Well they just want their children to be getting good results. And maybe learning about their own culture.

S: Do you think that teachers...

B2: They just want them to be doing well – making things easy for them.

S: Are you aware of changes in the educational system?

B2: Only about this National Curriculum and SATS.

S: And what do you feel about that?

B2: I think it's taken the fun out of primary school really – it's put a lot of pressure on the kids to know about these things. You know at seven years old they know what they've got to do. Sometimes I think it's not fair for the ones who are not as clever as others. Because that SATs are not – I'm thinking of our children whose first language is not English. They'll never be able to get as good as everybody else and even if they've improved there's nothing to show at the end of the day.

S: Because at the end of the day it 's where they're sitting [in the class]in terms of...

B2: Whether they've reached stage one or two or whatever. And you know that doesn't show if the children have come along in leaps and bounds because they didn't have anyone to help them with their English at the start.

S: Do you think that, are, those, are the sort of reasons, because one of the things that comes up obviously is because one of the things that comes up – I think I've mentioned it before – it's about parent's involvement with the school or lack of involvement. What would your response to that be? You know what are the reasons for it? I mean you sound quite conversant with the whole system.

B2: What do you mean about the parents?

S: I mean parents don't turn up at parents' evenings and get involved with the school.

B2: If I think about my neighbours across the road. They don't usually go because of the language problem. They have and I've been with them sometimes and it's been very difficult for them and they've just wanted to go home. They just wanted to say to the children – but they wanted to say things to the teachers but they just couldn't get it out.

S: What sort of things do you think they'd want to say?

B2: They wanted to know how their children were doing you know – doing well or not.

S: But what stopped them? The language? Anything else?

B2: The language and maybe feeling very odd because people were looking at the way they were dressed and things like this. You know whenever they talked because they talked with an accent everyone was looking at them.

S: It must make them feel very self –conscious.

B2: Yes they were so embarrassed at that meeting. Cos she couldn't say the words properly and after that she went home.

S: So it was a struggle.

B2: Yes

S: And also knowing what's going on at a school they're such complex things.

B2: I mean they have a letter in English and they just don't know what it's all about. They have to rely on other mums to tell them. I think if there's in-service day or something like that parents don't realise and they turn up to school.

S: So yeh it's quite critical in some ways. But I'm also aware that the Mosque is also an area where they feel a bit more confident?

B2: Oh yeh in our local Mosque or our community centre that we use as a Mosque the children come and the mums come as well to have a social session or listen to gossip.

S: I know and they're very involved on that level and they're enthusiastic...

B2: And they're the ones that encourage the children to come to the Mosque.

S: So it's not just for namas it's also for ...

B2: For Islamic teaching. Sometimes the women come [the centre] to talk about religion as well.

S: So you do have quite a discussion forum there?

B2: Yeh.

S: No that's very interesting – that's very important actually.

B2: A lot of ladies they want to because in Bangladesh it was all around them but here it's not – because you could just stay at home and read your books but that's a bit dry.

S: What would they discuss in their religion?
B2: Oh they'd probably talk about what the prophet did. There is lots of stories of the sahab and what his daughter Aisha did. And what sort of ...

S: Fill in the bits that they don't know?

B2: See how they could do that in their own lives.

S: Oh right how they apply these stories, these sort of parables.

B2: How we can be a better Muslim.

S: So they do discuss those things. Would they be doing that in Bangladesh as well or is it just some thing that they do here.

B2: Oh no there are also a lot of places in Bangladesh – you know Bangladesh is still achieving – I mean a few years ago not many people were covering their heads and wearing scarves and things. It was thought a bit strange and peculiar. But now they're wearing their burqua and the head scarf. Did you see that?

S: Yes I did sometimes – not as much as I had expected to.

B2: Nobody in X's family except for one sister-in-law whose ... except for them ...

S: Right so there's two extremes almost?

B2: Even my aunty, she's changed.

S: So they would become more concerned about how they can apply the Koran to their life?

B2: Yes how to be a better Muslim.

S: Would they ever discuss or also consider the stories – you know sometimes you said the parents will...

B2: And the

S: ...with the children?

B2: And the stories will tell you how you can gain strength from being a good Muslim.

S: Right I just wondered, that's important I hadn't known about that dimension. I asked you originally a difficult question, which you asked me to ask you later. That you didn't feel you had an answer for – although all your answers have been brilliant. Can you think of the most important things that a child must acquire to become a successful person?

B2: Oh yeh; I think they should be confident about themselves so like themselves. And to be a good what?

S: A successful person.

B2: Yes, they need a good education.

S: You mean in school?

B2: Yeh and people who love them and are supporting them to do what ever they want. They need encouragement to do what they want.

S: So actually to make those choices that you've been talking about earlier.

B2: So that there's always someone there to support you because that's how we do things you know. If we decide we're going to do something – get a job here or get a job there we ask advice from everybody and people usually try to give positive advice. To be successful you want to know that there are people behind you who are supporting you.

S: So you're not too isolated in that situation?

B2: No just doing it on your own.

S: Right that's great – that's a very good answer. Um I think actually all those questions have been answered. Is there anything that you'd like to add in terms of – that you'd like to draw my attention to about either being Bangladeshi or about issues around school and education? (pause).

B2: About being Bangladeshi I myself I just want to know more things about Bangladeshi culture. So when I talked to a Bangladeshi person I know what they're on about and I know the famous poets and um writers and things so I can share things with my husband. Sometimes I can't always share those things and he's always having to visit his friends and I can't speak Bangla so I can't always converse with them in Bangla and he can't enjoy that.

S: And they discuss poems and things?

B2: Oh they like talking about anything and everything; they love 'uddar' it's called. Bangladeshis are famous for ...

S: What's it called?

B2: Uddar, uddar

S: How would you spell it?

B2: Adda.

S: Right.

B2: Yeh that's what Bangladeshis are famous for.

S: Is that chatting?

B2: It's just chatting – you have meetings with people and you're just chatting the hours away.

S: Yeh that's lovely.

B2: We did that yesterday, we just popped into somebody's without announcing. Nobody ever – although things are changing as well because people's lives are so busy. People just drop in and say 'hello'

S: 'Here I am. Can we have a few hours or however long it takes' (B2 and S laugh).

B2: Because the hospitality is important.

S: Yeh I picked that up.

B2: And wives are always frying all these different things and I'm never as good as that.

S: I noticed that you given me rather a lot of cake to eat this morning (S and B2 laugh).

B2: Yes but I didn't make it myself – yeh but they're always frying it all – all these little things that they make.

S: Really.

B2: Yes all these little things from Bangladesh. It's called ...they make it with flour and turmeric and ginger and salt.

S: It sounds delicious.

B2: That's trying to keep all the Bengali traditions – making slapsa or what we call snacks. Always wanting people to be here or inviting people over.

S: And you have that lovely poetry session as well.

B2: Yes every first and third of the month.

S: That was lovely and I loved the way the children were quite spontaneous about reading out their poems. That's great.

B2: Yes I know a woman there who is an English teacher and he's really encouraged them.

S: That is quite distinctive.

B2: Yeh that is – I mean it's not in English culture as much as it used to be – you know the writers of poetry.

S: I think it's part of an elitism – I don't know if it is in Bangladesh on that level But I think in England it belongs to a certain class and I think it's changed at times but...

B2: No well I've been to X's and anybody who's got any aspirations must be able to sing, must be able to write poems. Writing is quite important.. The person we were just visiting yesterday he writes poems for magazines and if you ever read the Bengali newspapers there's always a big page devoted to poems and stuff.

S: Yes I noticed – and it's quite small the magazine – so it's quite dominant.

B2: And everybody likes to sing as well.

S: Yes singing is lovely.

B2: Did you hear Bengalis singing as well

S: It's interesting because when you talk to – there's a confusion and I may as well clarify that with you is that some of the, and I think mainly Pakistani children and also yes it was Bangladeshi children as well. They were talking about Ali fati Khan – who was a very famous singer in the west but apparently there are these stories that circulate because he sang too much. At least what I could decipher is that he sang about Allah in the wrong places bit too liberally or something. That there were these stories that when he died his tongue was wrapped around him and there was this snake around his body and things. And his wife asked to open up the tomb and found snakes around his body. You know this sort of story – and I was a bit confused because it had also come up as Islamic – is there something in Islam that says no to singing?

B2: Some people who are very strict would say that singing is against religion, er but I don't take that on board. I feel that 's our leisure time and it enhances us. We wouldn't be able to do poems if people were like that but a lot of the – I don't know I think it 's the fanatics and the Mullahs who try to control people

and who are not very educated themselves; they believe those things. They use it as a way of controlling people.

S: Are you aware of that in the community?

B2: I am because we have the community centre and we use it as a Mosque and we use it as our Sunday class and we have Eid parties in there. And people ask us not to sing in the Mosque on Eid days because it would be disrespectful because that's when people praying their namas. And some people they sing but they only sing religious songs. So um dancing as well they'd never dance or drinking or you know those things. So my dad used to say some very scary things like I'll cut off your legs.

S: Even worse then cutting off your clothes. (B2 and S laugh).

B2: Or breaking a leg or something if he sees you dancing. But this is when he suddenly became very religious when my uncle went to Nigeria or something with these .. .people and he came back very religious. But um not everybody believes – it's like a different style of...

S: It is a different style of Islam. Because there are different sorts of Islam.

B2: And the emphasis is very mundane and ...

S: Severe.

B2: Severe yes.

S: And I got the impression from the children that Saudi Arabia is also very strict.

B2: But it doesn't have to be like that if you read about the what the prophets did. I am sure they did sing and they did sports and listened to music and things. But some people have taken maybe something from the Koran and a story of a prophet and took the meaning to be that you can't listen to music because it's getting away from God.

S: It actually came up on two occasions; one was that I brought these calendars back from Bangladesh and gave them to some of the families and that was fine because they had pictures of Bangladesh on them. But I couldn't find anything of that sort for the Pakistani families because I didn't go to Pakistan and so I brought them back a calendar but it was Islamic paintings – well it wasn't really – it was that sort of beautiful art that people love in the west as well – it's got some Islamic inscriptions in it but it's ...anyway I brought some of these calendars back from Delhi and they wouldn't put the pictures up; they had to always take all the pictures off or just put the calendar away. And in the end they said that Allah wouldn't accept any pictures especially in a room where they might do prayer.

B2: Yeh that's right I don't usually – as I have pictures of the family I wouldn't do namas in here. You see one of the stories is that a prophet was doing his namas and his wife put a beautiful tapestry or something like that on a wall with birds or animals on it and he found it very distracting and so he took that out.

S: Ah right so that's where it started from.

B2: So people have taken that to mean that they shouldn't have any pictures at all but what his wife did was that she just put it in a different place.

S: No that's fine I can't remember what the other issue was but it came up as an issue about pictures and decorations.

B2: It's just that you don't want to have anything distracting. But some people believe that if you have pictures of animals or people; that it's disrespectful to God. Only he can create living things and they'd be trying to emulate him or whatever. So that's my dad always told me not to draw pictures of animals or people.

S: But do you think there is a difference between the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities on that level?

B2: Well nowadays because of the religion you'll find this kind of talking with Bengali and Pakistani people.

S: Both?

B2: Yes. But if you look at our culture Bengalis love pictures of families or pictures of the poets maybe on the wall or of RabindranathTagore.

S: Because it sounds as if when people become more confident or fluent with adapting the culture especially with what goes on in Bangladesh.

B2: Yes that's right I think that people who are more educated are more confident to be more adapting and um some people are not as broad thinking.

S: And would they be dominating in the community – these people the ones that are more strict? I mean in terms of the general way in which the community runs?

B2: Well if you think about the mullas and things – I think a lot of them would be strict.

S: I mean I just wondered because one of the teachers at a school – she's Asian herself and she said that the Asian community is very insular and doesn't mix. And obviously that would come more from a more strictly defined idea about how you don't mix with these different people.

B2: Because people worry that people will forget about religion and take western values. They'd be nothing to look forward to in their life without religion and it would die out and everyone wouldn't get married.

S: Well I noticed that there is that tension there. Because I've heard it but on the other hand E gave me the impression that there were more people in the community who would accept changes about people getting divorced or ...?

B2: I think children who are brought up in this country will accept it more. Because people talk about it more in this country whereas as people wouldn't talk about it in Bangladesh.

THE END

B3: Bangladeshi radical
(who was originally RB3 see appendix one) and S: (researcher).

After introduction

S: So generally I'll ask you these questions but I won't necessarily ask you in this order – just whatever feels right. So could you tell me what it feels like to be a Bangladeshi? How would you describe being Bangladeshi?

B3: How I feel like?

S: Yeh how you feel.

B3: I feel happy to be a Bangladeshi.

S: And would you say anything else about it? None of the other Bangladeshis will know what each other say. If you want to...

B3: I think it's great to be Bangladeshi and I feel proud of it.

S: You feel proud of it; though you live quite isolated from the general Bangladeshi community – but you still feel Bangladeshi?

B3: Yeh I still feel Bangladeshi.

S: Do you feel more Asian – I mean how does that fit?

B3: I feel that I'm Bangladeshi.

S: The fact that you don't mix with the general Bangladeshi community doesn't matter to you?

B3: I do mix more recently.

S: Oh good. I know it's difficult.

B3: I can't just ignore my Bangladeshi people.

S: There is something I was going to ask about that which is right at the end but I'll ask now is – I might come back to it again – is 'do you think there's changes in the community – that the community is changing?

B3: Yes.

S: In what ways do you think it might be changing?

B3: Changing in that it's not just like the background – like the way things were before – like mostly arranged marriages were done but now like so many people think about love marriage or to see the person they are going to marry and – I feel like less force.

S: More relaxed?

B3: Yes.

S: And they will discuss these things?

B3: Before they just got you married to anyone but now they'll talk to you and they say 'what do you want to do?'

S: So they appreciate your situation more as well?

B3: Yeh – so many problems like Bangladeshi ladies have – so now I think most people are changing because of all the rumour of divorce. They just feel they have to ask people before they do anything.

S: But basically they're learning to adapt?

B3: Yeh

S: To the different culture coming in but they still feel like you – sure of being Bangladeshi?

B3: Yeh.

S: So British citizens but mainly Bangladeshi?

B3: Mainly Bangladeshi.

S: What's it like to be a Muslim?

B3: I also feel good to be a Muslim and proud to be a Muslim.

S: Do you think that's quite different from being Bangladeshi?

B3: Yeh Bangladeshi – it's just a country – like Pakistani it's just the name – like this is England, ...– just name – name of the country. Muslim we're all are like Pakistani people; there are so many people are Muslim – they have to pray all the time five times a day; you're born to be Muslim.

S: Do you think that's the most important thing?

B3: Yeh the most important thing – remember God. And if you don't remember God there are things you have to do.

S: Whereas with being Bangladeshi it doesn't suggest so much the way you have to live? Is it being mainly a Muslim that...

B3: No it's already - Hindu people live in Bangladesh.

S: Yes but in terms of you – in your way of life it means living mainly by Islam?

B3: Islam yeh.

S: And not so much Bangladesh identity?

B3: I have to follow Islam.

S: The principles of Islam?

B3: Yeh.

S: So what do you think are most important in a child's education?

B3: I think they should know about Islam.

S: That's the most important?

B3: That's the most important thing for Muslim people– like my children go to school but every evening I take them to the Mosque. Every Monday, Tuesday to Friday.

S: Oh you do – which Mosque?

B3: ... road. So they need to go to school to be educated but they need to know that they are Muslim, like to know how to learn how to read like kayda, like Koran, like holy book - that is most important for children.

S: So it's essential?

B3: Yeh but that means double for them.

S: Yes I'm really amazed at how much they know.

B3: And they get homework so much.

S: Do you – are you aware of any differences in the way that the Mosque – or the way that the Koran is taught and how things are taught at school?

B3: No they don't make this kind of thing – they understand that we are Muslim.

S: But they have a different way of ... But at school what do you think of the education at school?

B3: The education at school – they do learn about Muslims but less - they don't have one class about Islam and all that. But I would be happy if they had one class.

S: You would like that.

B3: Once a week that would be good and children could learn about their Islam.

S: About it – about general ideas?

B3: About general ideas because they'll understand.

S: Because in the Mosque they learn ...

B3: In the Mosque they learn about all these things but I would be happy if they had Islamic teachers going to the school to teach there.

S: In the school?

B3: Or for any other people who are interested to hear what is Muslim; how they do things.

S: So a bit like a discussion group?

B3: Yeh

S: So what do you think are the most important things that a child must acquire to become a successful person?

B3: Being a Muslim.

S: That's the most important?

B3: Yeh and being educated as well.

S: When you say educated what do you...

B3: Educated means they go to school and they do well I'll be happy as well – I'll be very pleased with my children. If they don't get educated they can't work they can't do jobs and all this – they'll be suffering as well.

S: So you're doing further education as well?

B3: Yeh I study.

S: How are you finding that?

B3: Fine – I feel that there's confidence I've got...

S: So it gives you more confidence?

B3: Yes it gives you more confidence.

S: And what about your children do they learn Bengali?

B3: They learn – they know Bengali – they've been many times to Bengal so they know very good.

S: Really?

B3: They can't read or write but I can't give them that much time. It's too much and it's too hard.

S: Going to the Mosque as well.

B3: And like other class they've got – like to read. Mosque is where they read Kayda and all that and to learn Bengali that's another thing as well.

S: But the most important thing is to be ...

B3: Be a Muslim.

S: And after that then to get a good job and to feel confident through education?

B3: Yes.

S: So in your traditions is one gender or the other more responsible for the education of children? Is it more the mother or the father?

B3: Mother.

S: So it's a lot to take on.

B3: Yeh. Mother is the one who is blamed if children don't do well.

S: She's responsible – the one you turn to.

B3: Yeh.

S: What do you think are the most important things in terms of the school education?
What do you think the teachers expect?

B3: Well schools and teachers want the children to do well.

S: But what do you think the school wants from the children?

B3: I don't know I have to think about it. What do they want?
S: Yes what do they want out of the children do you think?

B3: They want the children to listen to them and to do homework well and all these things; to bring their homework in on time.

S: And do you get a chance to go into the school at all?

B3: Sometimes- not very often.

S: Why is that?

B3: Because it's very difficult for me.

S: It's not because you can't speak English?

B3: No it's not because I can't speak English.

S: It's just that sometimes people ask but can you see – not just yourself but why other mothers might not go?

B3: It's the language. And my mum is suffering so much I can't leave my mum for the school you know. It's very difficult my brother [B3 is a mother but also has a younger brother]is very naughty sometimes and gets beaten up and all this and he doesn't go to school – he doesn't like to go for a few days. So I'm just the one side but there must be both sides. My mum she doesn't speak English and they can't understand why this situation is like this.

S: So there's confusion trying to explain things?

B3: Yes and I'm very busy or just tired.

S: This is your brother?

B3: He's fourteen and he won't go to school and he gets bullied and all this.

S: And they can't speak the language.

B3: They can't speak.

S: Do you think there are any other reasons, which might create problems for them? Like a different environment?

B3: No that's not the problem they just need someone to go with them to translate what's going on. They would like to understand how to do all this.

S: Are you aware of the different way in which they teach in the Mosque when they teach children the suras and the way in which they teach in the school?

B3: There it is done different.

S: Yeh it 's differently?

B3: It's different; they talk about Islam in the Mosque and in the school they just all this thing about education- how to read and write.

S: And they use a different method of teaching why is that?

B3: Yes they use different methods.

S: Because some of the children – when I talk to them they say that can be hit.

B3: Sometimes yeh.

S: Is it quite strict?

B3: Sometimes they show that; I could hit you if you don't listen to them and if --- but they don't mean to hurt. They have a stick and they say listen children.

S: It's a different way of teaching though.

B3: Yeh different right. And I think you have to learn if I don't behave myself I will...

S: Get into trouble?

B3: I will get into trouble.

S: Do you think that there are things that may confront your children or even say your brother that didn't confront you or your parents? As they have been brought up in England or in ...

B3: Sorry what?

S: Do you think that there are issues that may confront your children or your brother that didn't confront your parents? Do you think they are dealing with a different situation now?

B3: Yeh they are.

S: What is different?

B3: Different yes because if my parents try to be strict with my brother he says he is going to ring the police – so he threat them.

S: He threatens them?

B3: Yeh all the time.

S: So he's become more assertive?

B3: Yes he is he's very, very naughty.

S: So there's a confusion?

B3: It's they're confused because if they were in Bangladesh he wouldn't do all these things. He needs to be good person for himself and if he got beat up one day he wouldn't do all these things and say all these stupid things at the school or in the house. He wouldn't cause so much trouble for other people. He'd talk to them and they'd understand. So because he's in England he can say he can call the police so that 's the power children have and they're just spoilt with that.

S: Yes. Do you think there might possibly be things about the western culture that your children might be attracted to?

B3: Western culture you can move house if you get old you can go into a home if you are homeless you can get a house.

S: So the home's different?

B3: Yeh because in Bangladesh they know home is home and there is nowhere else to go. There is no help outside of the home,

S: So they're more dependent there.

B3: My mum can say fine I'm leaving home; they can say right I'm going now you don't listen to me I'll go and live in a home.

S: What about the things with your daughters, your own children? Do they seem to have a similar experience to you or is it slightly different; were you brought up here?

B3: I've been brought up over here but I talk to them right and they do understand. If they do something good then I talk nice to them. If they did worse like my brother then I'd need to beat them. But they are behaving very good.

S: And you talk to them.

B3: Yeh, I talk to them and they're not very naughty they don't disturb other children or make trouble or fuss.

S: Do you think that's partly because they're female?

B3: Some females are very, very naughty.

S: What would be considered naughty?

B3: Naughty means that they just to school and mess about with other girls – pulling their hair and this and that.

S: Do you think there are things within the community that wouldn't be allowed?

B3: ...?

S: And do you think in the community there's more acceptance about divorce now?

B3: Yes if they feel you are suffering they understand that you must leave the marriage.

S: But originally they didn't?

B3: Not before they don't but now they do.

S: How many years ago was that when you were divorced?

B3: Four year now.

S: So things have moved on - that's great. I've only been here for two years and in that time it's been changing. Because Bangladesh itself is changing.

B3: Yeh changing all the food and all this and the shops and places - some of them are quite nice.

S: More modernised?

B3: Yeh so many things have changed the houses and everything. Did you see all the nice new houses?

S: Yes.

B3: Did you see the big new buildings?

S: Yes there's some lovely houses. I went to different places I also went to some poor places but people were really lovely.

B3: Lovely yeh. People who've got money they have luxury there.

S: Do you think the children might have any issues around having a Muslim identity?

B3: No.

S: They don't feel isolated?

B3: No when my daughters go to school with some of their English friends I asked them how do you feel being a Muslim? And they say, no I don't think about it; you just cover your head.

S: Because more children are doing that now.

B3: More are doing it and I say do you feel ashamed to cover your head or are you not ready yet? I don't force them – you have to do it, you have to do it.

S: So you let them wait until they're ready?

B3: Yeh.

S: So basically you said that the issues that might concern Asian parents – because there's always some debate with the teachers when they say Asian parents don't come in – and there's a whole variety of reasons. So what would be the main ones that you would consider?

B3: The reasons are they can't talk, they can't make friends with anyone. They're thinking I can't talk; I feel uncomfortable.

S: They feel on their own?

B3: Yeh and they think what's going on?

S: And it's different from their education as well?

B3: Yeh.

S: What about your education.

B3: I had an education in Bangladesh also.

S: So you know about the system. What do you think might be the – because although I am looking at the positive things about the community and how things are changing – but what do you think may be the most difficult – the most challenging things that the community might face now?

B3: No I don't think so.

S: But you've mentioned the problem with young people behaving differently? That's quite challenging for the community?

B3: They're not being the ones we want them to be. And the community might feel you should do the way we want. And the children who have been brought up here they think no we don't want to do that; we want to do what pleases me.

S: And where do you think the children's greatest confidence lies – do you think it's with the community or their families?

B3: Their family.

S: The family ultimately. It's who they return to because the community can't understand?

B3: No. The family is the support.

S: But you feel that the community is moving on?

B3: Yeh they are changing. Do you think things are changing?

S: Well to be honest I think that there are these individuals that are moving on but sometimes the community can be quite anxious about change because you know it gets worried about losing something. But individuals like yourself or one or two others because they have to face different issues they – become – well because of their different situations they have to be more adventurous and they have to look further than just the community. Whereas if everything's fine in your family you can just stay with it - and it is quite traditional – that's what I do feel. But I think that's good – I can't judge it.

B3: Yes I know.

S: It's individuals who need a bit more space.

B3: Yeh they do.

S: I am aware of this tension but I am also aware of things changing.

B3: Yeh things are changing.

S: I want to convey that because often there's an expectation of Asian communities being quite traditional and rigid. And I think there is a feeling that they are moving and that not everything is being lost either. There's still a strong sense of...

B3: Of being Muslim and being Bangladeshi.

S: So I've answered a question I was asking you – but what do you think is changing?

B3: Changing means that they can accept somebody's divorce.

S: Last time you said it was their culture or being Bangladeshi was more of a constraint – was more limited in the way of life than being Muslim?

B3: Muslims feel that if marriage is not right then that if the husband and wife are fighting that husband can find another wife but lady shouldn't leave their husband.

S: That's the Muslim...

B3: Yeh that's the Muslim religion says that. And I feel that if it's not right and you; you can't live with someone if there is no respect- how can you tell that person how to live – you have to get divorce it's better to have free life.

S: Where have you got your independence from to deal with that – I mean it's quite a difficult situation for you on your own?

B3: I was on my own but there was also my family.

S: It was your family that gave you strength.

B3: Yeh .

S: So then afterwards the community ...

B3: But it took me a long time – ten years or eleven years to finish it off. From starting I wasn't happy.

S: And would they ever accept you getting remarried?

B3: There are so many proposals coming for me and my mum and dad would be very happy if I started a new life.

S: And what about you?

B3: I just feel I am not ready yet. There's so many people who are saying when is your daughter going to get married...

S: Would they expect you to get married?

B3: Of course they do; they even say get married don't waste your life.

S: Do you feel you're wasting your life?

B3: I don't feel I'm wasting my life.

S: Do you think it's the expectation not just of Islam but also of the community that they expect you ...

B3: No it's not the community it's just the family. They say maybe one person is not nice is violent but than not everybody would be like this. But I had a really bad experience.

S: Yes it makes you quite cautious.

B3: I said that if I get married or not get married I'll make the decision in the next year.

S: Ooo that's a huge decision to make (B3 and S laugh).

B3: I'm not postponing it - not forever.

S: You never know who's going to come along.

B3: I feel as I get older it's not worth struggling alone. And the community would laugh because I have a daughter and she'll be ready to marry and they'll say about me oh my God you're so old that you can't get married now.

S: They'll laugh? Because otherwise they'll say that you're getting married at the same time as your daughter?

B3: And the community cannot accept this.

S: So if you have children they'd expect you to find a father of some sort?

B3: It's not the children – it's they just think that if you live alone you need some company. They think that it's to waste a life.

S: Oh yes I visited parents who asked me about how I can live on my own.

B3: How did you feel about it?

S: Just a bit confused because I'm not used to worrying about it.

B3: Do you think you'd get married – or you're used to living alone?
S: I've got used to living on my own and I've got my children and I enjoy living with them and my life is very full anyway.

B3: I feel there is no hassle in my house and I feel better now actually without men around.
S: So do you think the men – the boys are going to be the same or do you think they're going to be helping more with housework; do you think they might change as well?

B3: They might change.

S: But you don't have to deal with that because you've just got daughters luckily. Um so the last question is in what ways do you think visits to Bangladesh affect the children and what do you think parents want children to gain from the experience?

B3: They think they should go to Bangladesh to go to their own country and see the culture because it's different there.

S: Would you want your daughters to go?

B3: Just for a holiday and not now.

S: Why not now?

B3: Because my daughters have got their school exams and things.

S: But if they go there what would you want them to gain?

B3: I want them to go there and see Bangladesh and what is Bangladesh and where is Bangladesh.

S: And do you think they've heard stories about it?

B3: And to see their father's family and their relations.

S: Do you think they liked going there even in the heat?

B3: Yes they loved it, they didn't complain, they didn't mind that. They're having so much fun there. Children don't care about the dust or this and that.

S: Do you think that there are things that you feel that I should be aware of – I mean generally you've expressed that there have been changes in the

community. And that generally it's most important to have a Muslim education for a Muslim child and that there is a difference between the Mosque system and the school system

B3: Yes definitely.

S: But you don't feel that children face any problems with all those differences?

B3: No I think they are all right.

S: Not your children – other children?

B3: Well they might.

S: Because it's quite a lot.

B3: It is quite a lot.

S: I just wonder how much they do cope sometimes? You've had all those things to deal with. Can you understand why young people might break away from the community?

B3: Because people in the community don't respect you.

S: So people sometimes move away for a period of time because they feel they haven't got ... but they can always come back?

B3: Yes.

S: But you like coming to... which isn't Bangladeshi – it's more – what would you say about it?

B3: It's like for all Asian people – all mixtures, not just Bangladeshi.

S: And how do you think ... affects the community?

B3: I think it's quite good you know because it people are getting so much help from here. They can come here to get their eyes done and their henna and they can do their exercise and keep fit. So they can mix with other people.

S: But I am aware that there are divisions in the community that certain groups stay in different areas.

B3: Yes. In the Bangladesh Centre it's only Bangladeshis that go there.

S: There's nothing else that you'd like to say?

B3: No.

(Some of the tape was difficult decipher so one or two parts have been missed out. I recall that there was a time when A described how

Bangladeshis have different codes of behaviour from for instance Pakistanis though they are both Muslims).

THE END

P1:Pakistani spokesperson:
(who was originally RP1see appendix one) and S: (researcher).

After Introduction

S: So the first question I would like to ask you is 'what is it like to be a Pakistani?'.

P1: Well it's very nice I'm very proud to be a Pakistani; I think as you get older you realise the richness of being linked to a southern country or southern faith or culture. I think when you're younger – a teenager, although I have to say I didn't feel it I think my teenage years went – it's like a blur I don't remember much of it , but I don't remember feeling anything bad about it. Although I might say that I didn't know too much about it because I was young and you don't think of those things then. And we only had my parents and brothers and sisters and we'd all been in England for a long time. Whereas now I've got friends and relatives and sister- in-laws and I know a lot more about Pakistan because I've been over quite a few times. So certainly with age...I think with my children it's a bit different because they've got more people around them so there's more influence from Pakistan; so they know a lot more and they've also been more times at the age that they are now – you know in their late teens. So obviously they feel a lot more different than I did at the time.

S: So what is it like to be a Muslim then?

P1: I think that's equally rewarding and satisfying you know; it's the same thing – as you get older and more mature you realise I think you know that as you're a Muslim your life revolves more around your religion or your religion – you know the other way round vica versa.

S: Can you clarify the difference between the two because I've noticed that they do overlap over customs and things? So what would be Pakistani as opposed to Muslim; in relation to identity?

P1: I think as I'm Muslim I think I can say that as there's millions of Muslims, so there's a lot of things that you identify with other people. As far a being a Pakistani; Pakistan is the second largest Muslim country – the one that has the most Muslims um you know all my life has revolved around Islam and being a Muslim so um ....

S: Somebody said the dress – but I'm not sure?

P1: Oh there is – all the Muslims in different countries have a different dress code you know they all have their different national costumes and a different dress code. There are different customs whether it's around children, whether it's around weddings, whether it's around death – all these countries have different rituals and different customs. There's many similarities when it comes to religious based customs, so there are similarities although I would say that each area – each part of Pakistan have differences. If you live in the Punjab you may have different influences; if you live in the Sind then it might be slightly different, so I mean there's plenty of variety.

S: And would you be able to identify who is a Pakistani around here?

P1: Oh yes I'd be able to tell. I think you'd – again dress – the dress code although it's similar to other Asian people as well but the dress code; the looks as well because there is a difference. You know people can see that we are all Asians but there's definitely a look you know – the colouring sometimes um sometimes the jewellery they wear...

S: Um – what do you – now we're suddenly taking a big leap or change of direction here – what do you think are the most important thing in a child's education?

P1: In the child's education – what do you mean by that – do you mean ...?

S: Well you can decide how you would interpret – I think that's better then if I started whittling it down.

P1: Right the most important thing is for them to have a clear guidance um to have the right sort of influences; the right sort of people around them I think. And I think if they've got that then other things ...

S: A bit like guides?

P1: Yeh you know – and also somebody who understands their culture and religion; it definitely does help because then they don't feel isolated. And you know they don't feel as if they've got to prove themselves to that person; or disprove some of the stereotypical images that surround Muslims or Pakistanis or whatever.

S: They can just be themselves?

P1: Yeh.

S: So related but slightly different – 'what do you think are the most important things that a child must acquire to become a successful person?'

P1: Um to be a successful person – um well I think they've got to be confident. They've got to have this confidence which again doesn't come easily because when you're a child there's always issues going on in your head and around you. Um confidence obviously the education is obviously going to help – again the guidance whether it's at school or at home. Support from your family in whatever they choose to do, proper guidance and encouragement from parents – I think that's very important. Although I won't say that parents are always right. You know they might have a certain direction they want their child to take you know I think that Asian parents have a ....

S: Yes I know I think also the word success is very broad sounding and I think it's also very Western. Because all the time I've been working with this area – this topic...

P1: I suppose you can look at success very differently..

S: Could you think of another word...what would you use that might be more eastern?

P1: Um yes success can be defined in so many different ways – I mean to one family success may be whether their son or daughter had completed the

Koran you know and gone on to do Islamic studies. To another family it could be just that their child has simply gone to college. And to another that they've gone to university and then they've gone on further and become a doctor or whatever so it depends upon whatever..

S: But it could be sort of religiously based or it could be academic

P1: Academic yeh.

S: Or professionally.

P1: Definitely – I mean it's – I'm just trying to think of a word...um ...'fulfilled' but there again you have to see what the parents that the person themselves ...

S: It comes up again and again in different policies and things like that – but as I'm trying to work with it – there's this feeling that there is this dimension of an eastern meaning which probably means that there is probably a certain profundity there potentially with this influence of religion ...

P1: Yes I'm just trying to think of a word in our own language that would um ...I can't think what it would be ...um ...something that would, I mean the English wouldn't be one word – it would be – satisfying how – it would be like being satisfied with what you are doing – you know you find it rewarding --- I think again it would be on both sides on the religious and the academic side.

S: But you mention reward in what you're doing – it implies some internal thing within you ...?

P1: Yes I think it could be something that is rewarding for you – and that you've kept your family happy as well because that comes in to it because not just an individual can – you know it's a family thing. You're doing something that they will be happy with and you will as well.

S: Right fine – I'll think about it – that might help me to find another word myself in relation to what you've said. Um and what do you think are the most important things in terms of a child's Muslim identity?

P1: (pause). Well I think first and foremost for them to know that they are Muslim and to be proud of it – to be proud of the fact that they are a Muslim. Um and I think it's ...Muslim identity?... um I think it's being open as well and not feeling – because sometimes I think children don't want to say 'I'm a Muslim' because you know there are stereotypical images and negative images of Muslims, so that 's something they might not want to be open about because of racism. You know if they are in an environment where they might be vulnerable to racist comments or racist whatever then they may well keep it hidden or quiet. But it's basically to have the knowledge of Islam and I think you can never get too much of that – to always so much to learn about it. But I mean to be able to –you know it starts at a young age; parents start instilling these things into you at a young age. But I think to be happy with it and feel yes this is me and happy and I'm satisfied and I'm proud.

S: Do you see yourself – in term of a spokesperson – do you see yourself as someone who can expand ideas? Because I'm just wondering whether depending on the family – whether they have a breadth or depth of

understanding sufficiently to meet their children's needs? I'm just wondering as community representative if you feel that you can expand...

P1: Um well we are ...if we're Pakistani we are Muslim as well because we're Pakistani. I wouldn't say that all Pakistanis are Muslims. We're a women's Pakistani organisation but if a Pakistani Christian came along then they'd be welcome – whether they're Sikh or Hindu they'd be welcome just as much. But the majority of people in Pakistan are Muslim and the majority of Pakistanis in England are Muslim too. So we would – so it goes hand in hand – part of our remit is religious and what we try and do here is to expand the knowledge of the women and the children of Islam. Because there are so much, even the women want to know more, want to learn more.

S: Is it quite an educational centre here?

P1: Yes it is yeh. So I think with understanding it better I think children – I think even now I think the more I understand it the more happier I feel with it. So I think with children if you start at an early age and give them more understanding, apart from just learning the Koran which they do at the Mosque anyway they need to know a lot of other things and for them to grow up feeling confident and proud of it. Because it can get too late when they are seventeen or eighteen to understand – you know you can go through all the younger years feeling totally isolated and thinking you know why am I Muslim and you know issues around. You know there are a lot of dos and don'ts and rights and wrongs that are involved and I think those who understand Islam more; they can put the rights and wrongs in the right places. For them to be able to understand why do our parents not let us do this and you know find their boundaries. Because it's not you can't do this and you can't do that – it's not black and white there's a grey area as well – so they need to explore that.

S: I think that's very important and I got – I mean I don't know what you would like to say about that but I have heard criticisms about the community – one of the criticisms from the outside is that the community keeps to itself and it tends not to mix. These are the negative ones and not just the positive that I realise are very important as well. But from a teacher's point of view the community won't mix with other people and on top of that, that it can be very strict by contrast to western ways.. That's the sort of picture that somebody – not myself, might have created. And I've always thought because of yourself and Z and particular individuals that seem to have a certain openness and a lot of understanding and are not so severe about people or critical – I've always seen it as very positive in that sense. What is your opinion?

P1: There's a range really of people um some of them – I mean myself I have to analyse why and because it depends you know on families and family groups. And some are more devout than others so they have got their own boundaries and their own limitations for the children - for themselves. And some are slightly more liberal. I mean it varies from family to family.

S: What's made you sort of more liberal?

P1: I think it's parents really. My parents although they were devout – but they never forced it upon us and my father was in the air force and I think that might have helped a bit. And he always wanted to travel a lot and see new places.

S: Adventurous?

P1: Yeh very adventurous person. When we were young we travelled a lot – you know and it may not have been out of England but even in England we travelled quite a lot to different places so I think that's come up on us. And they were never ones to say you know you've got to have your head covered and that all the time. So in that way he let us follow certain fashions you know there were limitations there as well but he never said that you cannot...we knew from an early age what our limits were –you know through our mother – you know dad never had to say.

S: Oh your mother in that sense there's a difference between gender which is fairly straightforward within your culture. I presume that the mother does the work of educating...

P1: Yeh definitely.

S: And the father's there in the background when sort of reinforcement is required?

P1: I would say that is partly true. I would say that I think fathers are a lot more involved now. I mean in our case our father was more involved although he never sat us down and said you can't do this, you can't do that; we knew from mum what was right and what was wrong. And she would say you are growing up now, when you get to a certain age you know when your father's around you mustn't do this, you mustn't do that. Things like you know period times – you know if you've got period pains have a tablet and go up to the bedroom and don't sit on the sofa and go oow and ahhh. Because you know you don't want your father to know that; and it's things like that. You know because those are taboo subjects – although fathers know everything – you know they know what happens but...

S: But there are certain codes of behaviour?

P1: Yeh, so those sort of things and I never heard him say in front of us to mum they can't do this or they can't wear that. Mum used to sew our clothes and she used to sew whatever was the fashion but we wore trousers. So we kept within our boundaries of keeping everything covered, but it wasn't like full sleeves and up to the neck, we were allowed, and we were seen as being quite fashionable. Because most of the other children would wear the normal clothes and we would wear bell- bottom – which were the fashion.

S: At the bottom of the Shalwaar?

P1: Yes sort of cut dresses and just tops and trousers really I mean my father never said, 'well you can't wear that'.

S: So you were slightly experimental and creative?

P1: Yeh that's right.. But it was definitely a case of knowing what was expected of us and what was not.

S: So there were limits but on the other hand you could be quite imaginative?

P1: Yes.

S: So in a sense do you think there are different issues that confront children now around here that didn't confront you or your parents?

P1: There probably are some issues – I mean probably a lot of our issues are very, very similar, but with the times have changed slightly. Um in my time I had friends I had Asian friends, I had English friends at school but I think as with us and as with English children there weren't so many girls going out. You know now you have girls going out in the evenings so that they could go clubbing. I think in my time girls didn't go – as far as I know ...

S: Do they go clubbing?

P1: The Asian girls?

S: Mmm.

P1: They do yes but probably without parents' knowledge.

S: No I have heard that (P1 and S laugh).

P1: There are some girls that do but I know my daughter – I've said yes you can go out or go to friends but I won't let you go to a night-club. It's my own personal view and I do not want you to do that because I don't think it's the right atmosphere so ...

S: The whole thing might get out of hand?

P1: I've said well that's something – I'll let you do other things but – I'll let you visit friends and things like that but –and especially as she's just turned seventeen but I mean some of her friends have been going clubbing at nights.

S: And the Asian parents pretend?

P1: That's the English friends – not the Asian.

S: But there are some Asian girls?

P1: There are some Asian girls that do yeh because they say I'm going to a friend's house and parents...

S: Decide to ignore it?

P1: Yeh I think some parents; once they know about it they will probably confront their daughters – it matters about girls. Boys do go with parents' knowledge because it isn't considered so dangerous for boys.

S: They don't have to be so protective?

P1: Yeh that's right but they feel they have to be careful because one thing about them is that they're late at night and there's all the temptations available. You know drink and drugs – they might not take them but they are there and young men and also just the atmosphere. To me I know my daughter wouldn't take drugs and drink you know I know she wouldn't get off with a boy because

she knows her limitations. But it's the other things around in the night club and I just don't like the atmosphere I don't – it's not good for children.

S: I was also going to ask you, what are the most important things in terms of school education?

P1: In terms of school education? That includes anything about school at all?

S: Yes.

P1: Well one things is; the first thing would be the school itself.

S: Right.

P1: Where the school is; which area the school's in, what sort of school it is; that would come first and foremost. And the size of the school again looking at the school's past - at the background I think. I think those sort of things would come first. And then looking at the teaching methods and all the other things around school.

S: And talking about the different methods are you aware of the different way in which the Koran is taught in the Mosque and how teaching tends to go on inside schools?

P1: Yes I know in the primary school they have the religious education um and I think once in the year they may touch on Islam – again that's their interpretation of it. Which is fine I mean our children obviously have a bit more knowledge um and sometimes they're asked – I mean I remember being asked when I was at school about things. I think in those times people weren't so aware as they are now. Teachers themselves nowadays tend to make themselves more aware – find out more – talk to people to get a better view of it so that they're not giving a view that may put down children in the class.

S: What was interesting was that some of the children I talked to expressed very strong feelings and views about being Muslim. You know there was no question about their loyalty and commitment but they did mention that in some ways they preferred the more lenient ways in which teachers taught in the school. And they knew that some of the children didn't turn up at the Mosque because they felt it was so strict. They felt under a different sort of pressure there.

P1: I think they could be right because they are pretty strict and I don't know much about this [this area]Mosque but I think it's more strict in [this area] than it is in [another area]. My children went to the one in [the other area] and there was basically two classes; one from four thirty to five thirty and another from five thirty to six thirty. One for girls one for boys but they were often mixed because the younger siblings went with the older ones so it got a bit mixed up but although it was strict there was just one hour. I think in [this localarea] there are sometimes two hours and then they go to Islamic studies and things like that so they are pretty strict there is a lot of pressure on them.

S: Why is that so – why is [this area]like that?

P1: Um the reason is that they often have many children at one time and they've got one Imam teaching a good deal more children so obviously there's got to

be some strictness there. Part of the practice you know comes back from Pakistan where they're teaching those methods there.

S: They're very different.

P1: Yeh they are strict.

S: And they have different expectations?

P1: Yeh that's right and I mean they are strict with the children just to get through the time really because the children...Obviously they've had a day at the school and then they go to the Mosque for one or two hours obviously it's a long day – they are shattered I would say.

S: I'm really amazed at what they do do.

P1: I think one hour's more than enough. I know some don't come at the weekend they go to the Islamic studies and it is a lot of pressure on them.

S: Are you aware that just in terms of the school they are always asking the children to reflect on things well. You know that's part of the way in which they teach and yet by contrast they are not so much expected to question as far as I understand it – just to learn it.

P1: Yes that's right.

S: That's quite a huge difference.

P1: Yes basically they go into the Mosque and if they go to the Koran they know what page they are on and they'll go there sit down; get to the page and start reading. And then when their time comes then they'll either go up to the Imam or he'll come to them. He'll listen to them and he'll move them forward and they'll go on to the next page and so on. It's basically because there are so many – there's too many children for the one Imam.

S: I'm just wondering whether things are adapting a bit because the children are under such pressure of some sorts?

P1: I'm not sure in terms of learning the Koran I think that's going along as it is. I don't know much about the Islamic studies because I've never been to one so I'm not sure what the system is like. But I know the teachers they have there would have more knowledge of the teaching methods used in schools. So I think they would be slightly more relaxed and they would have much smaller classes as well. And then I think that because it's Islamic studies and there is more of a questioning – so more of a structured class. Whereas learning the Koran they go away and they're basically just sitting there reading through.

S: Yes it's amazing.

P1: And it works – it works!

S: What do think might be the issues that Asian parents might face in relationship to the school system? There is always that problem well it might not be but it seems to be an understanding that Asian parents don't get involved.

P1: I think parents tend to see the school system – because in - and I always go back to what the practice is in Pakistan or wherever parents come with that thought.

S: And they continue to come don't they?

P1: That's right.

S: Because they're still marrying into...

P1: That's right and out there not many schools have parental involvement and those probably schools that follow the English system and those are usually private schools. So parents don't usually have involvement – you know children go away and come back. Although they have involvement with their children's work at home; they get a lot of homework out there, and parents will make sure they'll get through those and they'll help if they can. I think they have the same thought here. I think the other one is almost not a fear but almost a reluctance because they think oh these are all teachers; they know what they are doing and because parents feel we don't know anything about the school system so we shouldn't have to question them. I know parents do but usually when there is a problem – they will question them. But on the whole because they feel that the system is set up so that they're going in; they're learning and also because a lot of them don't have the language themselves and how do they question something they don't know about. So...

S: And also they are doing a whole separate set of education at home any way.

P1: Yes that's right. To them their involvement goes as far as the religious education because that is their priority.

S: And do you think that because they are more confident sometimes of that area in some ways do you think they are more responsive to a child doing well in terms of learning the Koran or Arabic?

P1: I think so, I think so. Some parents I know are very involved or are involved up to the extent that they know the children need be good at Maths English and Science so they know about that. I mean the other subjects they don't often- are not too fussed about things like Music or P.E, Geography. It's only English, Maths and Science that they think they need to know and that they need to keep up with. Um

S: How do you feel about those subjects?

P1: Well I feel very importantly about those subjects as well but I know some children enjoy History- some enjoy History... (phone call interrupts).

S: Um so we were talking about– what were we talking about now?

P1: About education and parents' involvement.

S: And you started talking about other subjects?

P1: Yeh I'm saying that looking at how your child responds to – because I mean not all children are going to be scientists – some go towards the a– and I think

you have to know which way they are going. And then encourage them in that way. Because I know not all children are going to go towards the sciences. And then some may not be artistic at all and may be neither and may want to pursue ...

S: I know I've heard a view again which I'd just like you to comment upon which is about the gender thing. Somebody suggested to me that there is much more emphasis on the boys doing well at college and things and there is still an expectation that girls will end up as wives and housewives. Is that still...?

P1: That thought is still there though it's less than it was and I think parents are encouraging their daughters to go at least to college or higher education. Again it's looking at the benefits for the daughters that – you know if they are having an arranged marriage than if they've got an educated daughter then they are going to get an educated son-in-law.

S: So education is still seen as a way forward.

P1: Yeh I mean – yeh it is definitely. I know boys are encouraged more because they are going to be the breadwinners- they're seen – it's seen as more important that boys should have education and especially go towards the sciences rather than the Arts. With girls they don't mind so much them going towards the Arts but with the boys they prefer them to go towards the sciences. Because it leads to better jobs you know better qualified – better paid.

S: Right. What do you think are the most challenging things that your community faces?

P1: Um I think at the moment again it's education. Um with the recent report you know the Ofsted report saying that Pakistani children are way down right – you know almost at the bottom and that's quite a priority. And there's maintaining the culture and the religion, keeping the children enclosed within those things and ..

S: Why do you think Pakistani parents may not doing statistically – I mean I am not always impressed with statistics because they can be so generalised and not always explain the details. But why do you think there might be that issue.

P1: Um I think it's more at primary level that the reports have shown this. I think when they get to a more senior level I think there is – I don't know what the percentages are but there are quite a few Pakistani young men and women going on to college and university. I think what it is, is that at the age when parents can influence their children maybe push the children I think that is when the children tend to slack. I think when they get older they start becoming more confident and start knowing what they want – the young women and young men and they say yes right. And if they get enough encouragement and support, or even without it in some families; then they will say right I want to do well. I want to do 'A' levels, I want to go to university and if they want to they will do it with or without their parents' support.

S: And they get support from [a community centre]?

P1: Yes I think they could do – it depends in some cases especially with the girls they'll say no I don't want you to go to university and then there will be – and

she may say well I definitely want to go – this happened – it used to be college but now it's university, and then there will be a problem where parents will say – no I don't want you to go to...- it's partly to do with the money; it's partly because they don't want their daughters going away from home. And they may –you know sometimes they may compromise by going to the university in [locality] but there's some of them that have a course that isn't going to be suitable and they will have to go away and parents will not be happy with that. But there again it's more – I think it's more the fathers that are more and think the mothers will then try and talk the fathers round. But it depends again on the kind of family.

S: So it's the fathers that tend to be more resistant?

P1: I think so yeh because all of the worries about things that may go on and also communities themselves don't help because they'll come out with stories that my daughter went and she was away for three years and then she never came back. And then she married an English boy and who isn't a Muslim...The parents who have confidence in their children – who trust their children – especially in their girls; again an emphasis on the girls then they will allow them to do that. I mean for me I want my daughter to go to university but there again I want her to stay in [locally]. And it's not because I don't trust her and I've said to her it's not because I don't trust you. One is financial and two is because I would feel a lot happier with you being here because it would be a lot safer if you were here and then you could come home every day. She understands it but in the beginning she said she'd like to and she's been on trips and she's been away for like a couple of weeks and she's realised and now she's said to me . You know she's been in Spain for a couple of weeks and she came back and she said I really want to stay in Bristol I don't want to ..cos you know she's spent two weeks you know with her friends..

(interruption – phone call – followed by a more informal discussion between S and P1 – not recorded).

S: I just want to ask you about what goes on in the programmes on the Pakistani channel?

P1: Well basically there's two channels – one that's coming through free at the moment and one that you have to subscribe to. The one that's coming through free that's the one I've got at the moment. But this one comes directly from Pakistan although some of the programmes are set in England and come from England and some come directly from Pakistan as well. The programmes range from dramas, documentaries to ones about women. I mean one in particular - which is called basically women's hour- talks to women who are doing a diversity of jobs, and have different careers that normally probably in the western world, or even for us Pakistanis here, don't associate with women and women have got to do those jobs. And you know people think that in Pakistan people think they don't have those jobs but they do.

S: So what are those jobs?

P1: I mean we've got women prison governors or gaolers, we have women chief inspectors, women chief superintendents of the police station that are running

women only police stations – run by women for women and we've got the bank manager for women, we've got sculptors, writers and painters..

S: And this is the channel that is available for free?

P1: It is, it is – it's available on digital and at the moment it's coming through without any subscription. It's amazing how much of an eye opener it is because we here in England don't think that women could – not can't do it but are not able. .. I mean women writers – we have a lot of dramas now on Pakistani channels that basically deal with everyday issues. The dramas are written by women and they do involve very powerful women – you know portrayed – you know young women as well. Showing them working – you know women editors you know generally seeing them in a much more powerful role than is seen..

S: But this isn't – I mean I know people in [this area] must see these programs but it certainly isn't the impression that I get in [this area] as such.

P1: That's right – no you don't.

S: And I'm just wondering – not necessarily in relation to the television program but in relation to [this area] just wondered in what ways the community is changing?

P1: I think there is some change happening – it's very subtle changes. I think women are a lot more powerful than they are made out to be. Certainly in the family and within the system women have a definite role and I know some of them are very stereotypical images of how women are but I think women have a lot more say than is portrayed.

S: Yes I get that impression but do you think the overall expectation of women is changing I mean do you think; I mean in the past women have also been powerful but it's generally been denied.

P1: I mean there has been. Women now when they do have a powerful role they make it quite clear.

S: They don't try and pretend..

P1: Yes that 's right it's not a – because I think it was very threatening for men or the men in the family – threatening their authority – if the women showed up to be quite dynamic. But I think they're taking that on board now and think they're realising that women being powerful is a lot more positive than it is negative.

S: Are there any other things that you think might be changing?

P1: I think on the whole the family situation is changing a little bit; in some ways. I mean I I'm looking at people in [locally] but if I went to a place like say Bradford there might not seem to be many changes but in certain ways there are rather than no changes at all. It's difficult to explain really but if I'm thinking of [the local area] overall I think women have become a lot more prominent – young women. You know they are more likely to go into higher education – get into good jobs and they have husbands who aren't as educated as them and who then respect it. I mean their husbands know that

their women are more educated and that their English is better than theirs and they're not earning as much money but they are going to take that role on. Until they become more accustomed – because some of them come from Pakistan – then until they become more accustomed and until they get more into the role – they'll be quite happy – well not quite happy but still go along with it. But generally women are becoming more powerful.

S: So you would say that is the more obvious way in which the community is changing?

P1: I think so. And I think men are becoming a bit more liberal I would say in some ways.

S: But do you also think there is a part that is becoming more traditional as well?

P1: I think probably we here in England, in ... wherever are more traditional than people are in Pakistan. There they've got Islam around them all the time again they very much want the western influence and through TV Satellite– you know all the things that they're getting...

S: They want certain things – material ones?

P1: That's right, material ones.

S: And not so much the ideological ones?

P1: Certain ones do. But there again the ordinary middle class won't want that – well probably the adults don't. But in the higher classes then their life is quite western anyway.

S: Would you say there was a caste system of sorts really?

P1: I wouldn't say there's a big – there is a system – there is a caste I would say.

S: Even ...[locally]?

P1: ...[this area]– because each family has got their own caste but they don't think about it or don't use it as much – only when they want to set up marriage here than they look into the caste. Then they say yes we're looking for a partner for our daughter but we're this caste ...

S: Do you think your ...Pakistani organisation – do you think that's changing? How did you set it up – I mean what prompted you?

P1: Well there was – well I wasn't involved in it in the very beginning but from what I know there was an Asian women's network – basically women from different groups getting together and from that it was noticed that although there were groups for women you know Hindu, Sikh there wasn't anything specifically for.. (tape turned over) when they went into the Asian women's groups and when they had some sort of religious festival then they weren't able to practise it, then somebody else objected and there was conflict there, and also they felt that women – there was a lot of change going on with women at the time; children were growing up ...well this was 1995 – mid nineties. They said we want jobs; we want to learn there's nowhere we can go – where do we go? We want to learn training; we want to learn computing, we

want to learn, to do courses, we want to better ourselves so that we can get out there.

S: Because I've noticed that you've taken on a lot of different things now.

P1: We do yeh. We've changed a lot since we started back in 1995.

S: So the last question is; 'in what ways do visits to Pakistan affect children and in what ways would parents want their children to gain from these experiences?'

P1: Um what do they gain? I think one of the things that surprises them – that it's a lot more – I mean certainly with my children I would think and other children I've spoken to – that their cousins –their counterparts out there or the peer sort of groups are allowed a lot more freedom.

S: Yeh I've heard that.

P1: And that they're able to take part in activities or things in school that they wouldn't be allowed to here. That's one of the things that surprise them because they go to Pakistan and think gosh it 's going to be different to how they imagine and that's one of the things that does surprise them. I think that some of the things that they'll pick up is – what to explain – um they see I think the children there have a lot less than they have here but they're able to make more use of it. So with the resources that they've got they're able to make a lot. And they're able to – how to explain – (pause)- how to explain how I see it? Um I think children out there are slightly less selfish? Because they have got a lot less out there and yet they are more satisfied with it.

S: They have less expectations?

P1: Yeh that's right and although I do know they get a lot of - influenced by what is gong on here; there 's material things they might like but some of them know that they're not going to get them, then they know that they're a lot more, I think kids here do want more and again I suppose there's this influence because it's all around them all the time, whereas there they are just seeing it on television.

S: You also said that they are allowed more freedom – what sort of freedom?

P1: Freedom as in not - I mean with the children out there they go out and I suppose they don't have discos and night-clubs there – maybe they do in some of the cities and then certainly people will go to those. But things like visiting families – visiting relatives they do that but then that again is because they have got more family out there. Whereas children here – maybe they've got a lot less family here and maybe they 're in different parts of the country so they are not as close here as they are up there. I think families are a lot closer there.

S: So what you are saying is that they are able to visit more families.

P1: Yeh I mean they are closer to relatives – friends as well but there again I might say that that's all they've got there. There isn't many other places that they can go to.

S: Right anything else that you would want to mention that they get from being out there?

P1: Um I think they pick up certain values; there are certain values that they pick up. I think that they're able to see that I think they come back thinking- well it's unfair. They come back and they think it's unfair we're living here and we can't do this and we can't do that, they're living in Pakistan and yet they do a lot more- different things.
And they do feel that they are restricted here.

S: So why would you want them to go out there to Pakistan?

P1: I think it's so that they can get to know family more, certain values or morals that they can pick up there, that they can't pick up here.

S: They are more embedded in the whole society?

P1: Yeh and that they can't pick up here I think.

S: And also you suggested right at the beginning when you talked about generations that as you get older your culture and religion matter more or is more important to you - why do you think that is? As in younger person mightn't be so aware?

P1: I think when you are younger you're not looking at a broader picture – you are just looking at what's there in front of you. You know you are not looking – you are looking at the things that you would like at the time.

S: Immediate things.

P1: Yeh rather than looking at the broader picture or the future. So I think that 's ...

S: Looking at the future – what sense do you mean – do you mean like after death?

P1: Oh no I mean within life really. But you don't look to the future and think how will I feel when I'm older? You just think this is how I'm feeling – this is what I want, this is what I'd like to do now because all my friends are doing it.

S: Do you think there's more respect for elders than young people possibly?

P1: Oh there's definitely respect for elders I mean there always has been especially from the younger ones – there has to be. But again depending on families – you know some – it depends on the experience of children as well. Some children feel that elders are holding them back – I mean there's respect there but there may be a certain resentment as well because they're being held back. And sometimes they are moving in a positive way but the elders feel that it might be more negative.

S: So elders are giving quite a position of authority?

P1: That's right yeh and the way the young person is going is in a positive way – you know going into higher education but to them it feels oh no they want to get out of our system; and they want freedom. And they might become more

influenced by other people – you know other mediums; you know they may not want to come back into the family system again. That's always a worry but I think that's not a worry in Pakistan; you know parents don't have that worry. There they are more likely to let their daughters- if they can afford to – go on to university although we've only got a certain amount of places there. But they are more likely to let their daughters go – there's much more of an emphasis on education there than there is here.

S: Yes I have heard that from some one who comes from university there.

P1: So it's surprising here especially but some families are from Mirpur – you know from the rural villages – they tend to here – I mean their mentality is still very villagey. In Pakistan they've moved forward – I mean they've move at a much slower pace here.

S: There's a lot of transitions going on.

P1: Yes there is definitely. I mean I think children and adults feel it a lot because parents come back and think oh no I've been so restrictive with my children. But in a way when I come back I think well no –up to a certain limit you have to be. But I do allow ...

S: So there's a lot of negotiations that you have to ...

P1: Oh yeh analysing, negotiating, compromising all the time.

S: It's demanding.

P1: Oh yeh I mean sometimes I feel so guilty that I'm not allowing my children to develop or progress personally. Um but than I have to look at how we are here – you know where we are living...

S: The context.

P1: Yeh I have to look at that . When you come back you have all these thoughts in your head and it take a while to analyse them – you have to think but I'm not there.

S: Do you think that in itself is quite important – that business of moving into quite contrasting spaces? I mean do you think that quite independent of picking up all the cultural things like also identity and keeping up with the family. I always see those things as very obvious things but I mean the whole thing of being aware of other cultures and another place.

P1: I think definitely you have to look at both sides and than you have to choose what is right for your children or family and I know you can't get it right all the time. In some ways we may be doing things right and in others we're not. It is very difficult – I know it's difficult for the children but it's just as difficult for the parents. Because after all we are going to be living here and we're always being judged by the community you know whether you are allowing to let your children move forward or whatever – you are always being judged by the community; by our own family; by our elders. We have to look at all those things before we can actually move...

S: In an effective way?

P1: That's right. I think we as parents have to make a lot of compromises – with our own selves, with our families; with our communities and then we can move forward.

S: And why do you do all that?

P1: We I have – I feel that we have to (S and P1 laugh). Because then you almost feel as if you are working against the community and even though sometimes you may not want to do things – you may want to do things differently but you have to compromise almost without thinking. You have to think they are my community and my family and I do think that all the time. And I say to my children you know you have to do certain things because in the community; because in the family it's not allowed.

S: Do you think the community stronger in your cultural group than it is in say a western...

P1: I think definitely – because we are a small community, close knit, everybody tends to know everybody. With me the [other locality] community know me a lot more than the [this area] community. If I was living more towards this side they would know me but they me as a [the other locality] person. And everything I do I have to take into consideration my community – you know well what would they think; would they think it's too radical.

S: And is the community sense still of origin; of the community in Pakistan? Is it a different community sense – made up of the circumstances out here?

P1: It is created in a way – I mean community in Pakistan is more like a community living in England because then everybody is white whereas if I was in Pakistan then everybody is Pakistani. And may be there are different influences out there; may be I would look at the family rather than community itself.

S: Out there?

P1: Yeh because out there everybody out there is the same and people are thinking in the same way as you whereas here in our community I may be thinking totally differently from the way the rest of the community is thinking. Especially when it comes to progression and development.

S: But you like to be in that position?

P1: I do like to be but I'm not one of those – because I don't want people turning round and saying that's not how I would do it or you did this and now it's influenced outrchildren badly. I wouldn't want to put myself in that position either. I quite like being in the position where maybe people can look at me maybe as a role model. But I don't know if it's positive all the time – I know people they won't say if to my face we can never...

S: You can never satisfy everybody.

P1: I have to go...so it's very difficult.

S: It is – at least you've got X as well – two strong characters around. And finally I was going to say is, my focus is to do with education and to do with South Asian culture and it's diversity and issues around that, so I would ask you generally than; is there anything that you feel I should be aware of?

P1: I think we've talked through everything. But there again I would say that there is such a diversity in terms of the progression - you know I could be at one level and yet there are some people that are at another level. And I'm surprised by that as well when I read about them in magazines. I think oh this woman's done this and she came to England in the 1950's. There was one woman in our community who'd gone to fashion school – she's got grown up children now – she'd done fashion design – this is about in the 1960s and her parents sent her to Paris – which I found quite surprising because I know parents now wouldn't...

S: So you're always still discovering all these different...

P1: And it comes up as quite a surprise although I know it shouldn't.

S: Because actually the Pakistani community in [this area] is still quite broken – is still quite fragmented into different families – it hasn't quite the same cohesion as smaller communities like the Bangladeshi community.

P1: And also I think the community is made up – or in [this area] is made up mainly of people from Mirpur and they come from the rural communities where there is a high rate of illiteracy and we can't actually say that that represents Pakistan because it doesn't. Because Mirpur is very much a rural farming place I mean if you go into some of the ...if you go to ... they're more from Faslibad where there's a farming community but there is more education you know more academic in the background; not a lot more but slightly more. There are a lot more – I mean peopleare different in different parts of Pakistan. People come from Karachi which is the city ...

S: Do people generally come over because of the crisis about the dam and things like that but for what sort of positive reasons do they come over?

P1: Mainly because there was a lot of labour – they need a lot of people for labour work here and it was a time when Pakistan was part of the commonwealth, people were being invited to come over.

S: And you accept that quite a few say that they like visiting Pakistan but they'd never live there.

P1: Oh they do, they do like going there but they'd never live there – that's partly to do with the system they've got there; very simple facilities and very basic. There are parts of it that we all love and we go there and we think we could live here but there are certain facilities that are so basic that it makes it impossible. I mean not so much material things – I mean everything is available there but sometimes the water is there but it's such horrible water, it isn't filtered so it's got to be boiled, electricity often goes off . There are so many things that are –you have to struggle to – you know if you want to send your children to school than you have to fill in papers and then you have letters from so and so and letters from so and so.

S: It's much more complex.

P1: Yes definitely – you need to have good friends to help you with the very basics. You know if you've got problems or say if you have a court-case going on then you have to know a lot of influential people who can help you with that. And if you haven't got a lot of money then basically your'redead so you have to either come up with a lot of money or basically you have to find the right people.

S: So how would you answer a question that the children brought up and that they were concerned about – about the war in Kashmir? I mean I just said that it's never been clear who owns the land.

P1: That's right I mean to be honest I don't know much about it; I see it in the news everyday but I know that it's about Kashmir and India says it belongs to them and Pakistan says it belongs to it. And I think I would be alright if they had it half and half but the Indian half have Pakistani Muslim people living there and they don't want India to have it, so it's all this going on. But I mean it's quite a big issue for people living here because some come from Kashmir – maybe not that part and they get very upset about it because they say Kashmir belongs to Pakistan. But I have to say I don't know much about it.

S: And most people go to Hadj or Mecca?

P1: Yes that 's a sort of once in your life-time and it's acquired really when you can afford it. So most people will go when they're a bit older or when your children are married.

S: They go there literally to the visit the place; they wouldn't want to live there?

P1: No not to live there no. It's basically a pilgrimage that you do once in your life-time at least. Some people do more than once.

THE END

P2:Pakistani member:
(who was originally FP2see appendix two) and S: (researcher).

After reading out the introduction

S: Right my first question - which if you feel you can't answer immediately – that's fine we can return to it later on, but just to make you aware of it – is 'what's it like to be a Pakistani?'

P2: Good question...

S: What springs to mind?

P2: Colour, religion, just our whole way of life is completely different to the western way of life. It's a lot more cultured I should say.

S: What do you mean by cultured?

P2: Well we have to follow a set of rules basically and that means towards our religion our parents and even friends. That's it really.

S: That's very clearly defined – it's full of rituals and procedures?

P2: Yes.

S: And what's it like to be Muslim?

P2: What's it like to be? It's very difficult at times.

S: Why's that?

P2: Being brought up and born in this country it's quite difficult at times to actually adopt to our rules and regulations of our religion. But you just have to cope with it, I mean I've been brought up as a Muslim from day one and you just learn to accept it and if I do travel abroad or to Pakistan I do ...I mean it's all up to the upbringing.. .we've always had plenty of exposure to our religion so you learn to accept it like anything else.

S: It becomes a habit?

P2: oh yeh it's like smoking.

S: That's a bit of a negative ...

P2: Well yeh it's just like something you don't know how to...

S: It's like you don't know how to live without it?

P2: Yes.

S: And is there quite a difference between being a Muslim and being a Pakistani – I know that quite a few of the rituals overlap?

P2: Well let' put it this way, my thinking of being a Pakistani is a little bit different than most because I was born here so I've got the western side of it as well

as the Pakistani side to deal with. It isn't easy – I can't really explain that question because we're in a catch 22 situation sometimes and you do get into that...

S: But you can identify which Muslims are Pakistani and which aren't?

P2: Oh definitely.

S: So there are certain distinguishing qualities?

P2: Um the only way you can distinguish a Pakistani to other Muslims is possibly the way they dress. You know it tells a story doesn't it; it's a part of our identity.

S: Which would you place first as being most important to you if you had to?

P2: Um?

S: In terms of your identity then?

P2: My own personal view is possibly our religion; so we have to conduct ourselves in an orderly manner.

S: Right that's fine – I might go on to the last question at that point just in relation to all this and that's to do with the fact that you presumably take your children or you presumably take yourself to visit Pakistan every now and then?

P2: Oh yes regularly.

S: Um so the question is in what ways do visits to Pakistan affect children and what do you think parents would want their children to gain from these experiences?

P2: They possibly – they are our roots, to tell them about our ancestors, fathers, grandfathers and secondly exposure to the family which is very important to us. The number one priority in our culture is our family because we're so closely knit and that's it really to teach them that the family thing is very important as well as everything else in life.

S: So they know they've got strong connections over there that they can always rely upon and vica versa?

P2: That's right.

S: That's great. Right I'll move on to education then generally. What do you think are the most important things in a child's education – what would come to mind?

P2: As a Muslim parent?

S: You choose yourself what you would consider.

P2: Um I think education in this country is very important because they have to live for the rest of their lives in this country. And secondly -do you want to move on to the Muslim side of it as well?

S: Yes.

P2: Or is that just ...

S: No; do say that as well.

P2: Well basically we or I want my children to actually have the best of both worlds and the Muslim side of it is very important. I attend regularly the Mosques – daily five times a day – no I mean five times a week and ...

S: Pray five times a day?

P2: Well we're supposed to but not every one ...
S: It's difficult living in this country?

P2: Well basically you can't fit it in – not everyone can - but you can also make up for it later on.

S: So it doesn't have to be too rigid?

P2: No but I mean to me personally I think both sides are very important and it does actually teach them the religious side of things as well as the English way of life.

S: The English way of life is presumably in the education system?

P2: Yes I think that's more important to them because – more than the religious side because that's something that will take them forward. The religious side can actually take second place to the school– I think anyway.

S: No that's fine, it's good to have a variety of views.

P2: Yes definitely I don't want to push my children into anything that they don't want to do. But to make them just understand it is important as well and to bear it in mind.

S: Yes.

P2: If they want to keep the family (P2 and S laugh).

S: So the religious bit is important in connection to the family but the education in the school is important in terms of their...?

P2: Upbringing.

S: Upbringing in general ...

P2: That's right.

S: And in terms of knowledge about the wider society?

P2: That's right.

S: So what do you think are the most important things that a child must acquire to become a successful person?

P2: Um.

S: You can describe the word successful as you like.

P2: Well basically – are you talking about my children or just generally?

S: Well how you would like your children...?

P2: I would like my children to have possibly to have...and to conduct themselves in a nice proper way and secondly to respect anyone and everyone from all races that's what I teach my children. That's it really – just respect everyone that's all I want from my children.

S: That's really nice; that that's what you would consider to be successful is?

P2: Well yes.

S: That's fine.

P2: If you respect someone then if they don't respect you in return but if you respect them time and time again they will think again. It's very important.

S: Yes that's fine. What I haven't asked everybody but I'll ask you because you're very fluent with the English language is; what comes to mind in terms of, I've used the word success because I seen it often written into policies and such things – and so it's a very westernised term but if you think about, success in terms of a more eastern connotation – what do you think might be the equivalent word?

P2: (pause).

S: What would considered success or what would it mean?

P2: In our Asian environment basically?

S: Yes.

P2: Well basically nowadays people tend to look at you if you've got a business of some sort – you're successful in that manner or if you're religiously involved with your religion and if you've done something for your community and that's what they would say. They- the local community would say that this person is doing so much for the community he will be respected at the end of the day and he is classed as successful.

S: Is there another word at all that might be really important because you know success is a word that is used in the policies but there might be another word which means more about what you want your child to ultimately achieve..?

P2: (pause)

S: I mean you suggested respect for others but is there anything else?

P2: (pause). I can't really beyond that really – I feel that would be the ultimate – that's my personal view. I mean if you respect someone you will obtain respect from that person no matter how bad this person is, if not today then tomorrow.

S: No that's fine. I mean I shall work out my own...

P2: Of course!

S: But I just think – just in case someone – I like the way you talked about respect any way. Um what do you think are the most important things in terms of the children's Muslim identity?

P2: Muslim identity (pause) – I'm stuck on that one actually. I'm not sure what to say on that one although it's so obviously my identity – put that into words?

S: It's quite hard.

P2: It is a difficult one.

S: I get the impression as well that there's a lot of negotiation `nowadays going on about to what extent you can be a Muslim?

P2: There is yes, I mean with our own family in the religious side of it – it's mainly the Elders who are very religious including my mother (P2 smiles) and I haven't actually – I mean my children – I've gone to the Mosque in my young days and my children are going now but we haven't actually got to that point yet where you take your religion ...

S: Do you think that happens to everyone as they get older?
P2: As they get older- it's like most people you think of God because you know you're getting God now as you get older. And um...

S: No that's fine. So basically as I understand you want your children to have the education to be a Muslim (interruption – mother brings tea and snacks and off tape discussion for a short while). I mean Sajidar was very broad minded even though she is particular about her faith. And you were saying that you have to be broad-minded?

P2: You have to be broad-minded I mean you have to be aware because the Asian community doesn't just consist of Muslims, it consists of other Indians; Sikhs, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans even although we speak more or less the same language – we've got the same sort of similar values. To me my community is not just the Muslim community or the Pakistani – I respect all – as well as the English and Black community. We have to try to work together – but it doesn't always work sometimes.

S: Yes and she [Sajidar] was expressing how many decisions have to be made all the time in terms of what the children are going to do and how far they are going to go. ...So their Muslim identity is the most important thing for their future because as they get older...

P2: Yes definitely.

S: And they have to learn Arabic to read the Koran.

P2: Oh yes that's correct.

S: So in your culture who is responsible for the education of the children? Is it the mothers or the fathers generally?

P2: Both. Firstly education starts in the Mosques basically –at a young age the children tend to start because you can't really instil anything into the child until he's about five years old and then he starts going to the local Mosques. So it's the local priest who actually starts that and they start fuelling the information and then it's more or less put into practice at the same time. They start them off and then we try to fill the gaps basically. So they start living like a Muslim at the same time. It starts from the priests basically. And after they've studied everything than it's up to the mothers and fathers to maintain and make sure that they're still practising.

S: So it's the mother and the father; it's not particularly the mothers?

P2: No.

S: Is it slightly different from how it might be back in Pakistan?

P2: Um it's just the same – it's exactly the same in Pakistan.

S: Ah right – some people have given me the impression that women tend to take on ...

P2: Not necessarily but let's say in the 60's and 70's it was the women's job to do everything, religion as everything. But now it's changing the and is actually getting involved – more and more involved. Like myself and it's hard work.

S: And also you know English.

P2: Yes which helps. It doesn't matter if you don't know English – it's if you were born in this country, brought up in this country that makes the difference. I can relate to my children and they can relate back to me and the understanding level is a lot better. I can make them understand whereas my mother and father...

S: You can explain?

P2: I can explain better and they can't. It always works when it comes to me (P2 and S laugh).

S: It must be really nice for your children that you can explain things.

P2: Oh yes.

S: So what do you think are the most important things in terms of their school education?

P2: School education – the first thing that comes to mind is quite possibly English. I think they must learn the English language and speak it fluently/clearly and

make sure that they get the message across; I think that's the most important subject to me personally.

S: English.

P2: Yes definitely I mean if you can voice your views and the only way you can do that is if you speak well. You know if you're speaking in a – you're not going to be taken seriously for a start. That's just the way it is in this country or everywhere. If you speak well you will be heard and you will be listened to.

S: So that's most important?

P2: To me personally.

S: No that's fine. And are you aware of different ways of teaching between the Mosque and the school?

P2: Ways? Well (pause) the schools actually teach alot lightly; they don't put too much – they don't actually pressurise the children. But in our own language or rather in our Mosques and our own social centres it's a lot more disciplined. There isn't enough discipline in the school; I wish there was - a lot more. There is a big, big difference definitely because they take the religion very, very seriously. But they don't go over board they might make sure that the child knows that this is important – don't take it like it's just another English subject basically and you can go home and you can forget it. Because it won't happen; when you come back you have to actually know what you've learnt the previous day and you have to repeat. So I think that side of things taken a lot more seriously.

S: Do you think it's more thorough in a way?

P2: Definitely – it's a lot more disciplined.

S: And do you know – the one thing that concerns me is that you say you can explain things to your children about differences; cultural differences the ways of expressing themselves perhaps. But I know that they've got Islamic studies now – do you know if that's slightly more discursive[less didactic] than going to the Mosque and learning the Koran?

P2: Well Islamic studies is taught in English; the difference is that; it's just the same teachings but it's taught in English. I mean my children do go for two hours at ... for Islamic studies but those studies are taken lightly because when they come across in English – they don't sound very – what's the word – important really. They lose their...

S: Some essence?

P2: Yeh definitely – which is a shame really but that 's the way it is. The only reason why they go to this other school is to make sure that they do understand in English as well as...

S: Do they have things explained – is it possibly more an area where you can discuss or question then you would in the Mosque?

P2: You can question because a lot of children have this language problem – which I also had originally and it's very difficult for children today; I mean it was the same for me. We have to go to school – we have to speak English, when we come home we have to speak our Asian language whatever. And then we go to the Mosque and then we have to read Arabic as well as try to understand Arabic, apart from that you have to learn another language which is Urdu. And that's written, not in Arabic, as well as speaking it. So you go back to a school and you have to learn your teachings in Arabic but they're now in English. They seem easier but it does get difficult.

S: But what about your children do you ever speak to them in Punjabi?

P2: Yes but I always tend to get an answer in English unfortunately. Only with my mother do I speak Urdu and Punjabi – we speak both languages ...

S: Because that's going to be more difficult to maintain?

P2: It is very difficult. My children – if I speak Punjabi with them, they answer in English.

S: Because they know you understand it.

P2: And not only that it's with everyone. They understand the language perfectly ...

S: But they don't exercise it?

P2: I still speak English with my father, he speaks Punjabi with me and I have to answer in English I just can't help that.

S: What happens if you go to Pakistan then?

P2: It's very, very difficult. I took my children there last year – two of them – the youngest speaks English as well as Punjabi sometimes but he wouldn't speak a word there – just English. I mean if anyone spoke to him in Punjabi he didn't have an answer – he understood but he was too shy to actually speak.

S: Yes I can understand that. So are you aware of issues that may confront you that didn't confront you or your parents – in terms of education?

P2: Well nowadays like I said it's not disciplined any more – there isn't that discipline that there was when I went to school – there was a lot more and when we were told to do something we had to do it. But I think nowadays because of the teacher's pressure -that they're, under because children are not – they are in a faster lane than we were in.

S: What do you mean by faster lane?

P2: Basically I think that socially there's a lot more for them out there as well as indoors apart from the education side of it.

S: So that's the social factors?

P2: Yes that's what I mean and people not only children are competing with each other. Children have always competed with each other but now it's a lot more.

The only difference I've found now with the children today is they're more aggressive in every way. Which is a shame really; I mean even my children are aggressive.

S: Why do you think that is?

P2: I really don't know – it's just in society there is a lot more aggression. Let's say I am sure when you started driving – there's this road rage thing now – even when I started it wasn't around.

S: Right.

P2: It's everyone's a lot more – I think it's just pressures of life I think and everyone is just trying to do one better than the other. I don't know is it just something in the air? (P2 laughs).

S: I mean in Pakistan?

P2: It's the same; exactly the same – it's changing.

S: And what sort of challenges do you think your children might face in terms of their identity – being Muslims?

P2: It's very difficult trying to keep your identity these days because there are so many influences out there. I mean lots of ... at the same time I mean I couldn't cope with our religion but you just have to – it's all down to the family. If you are closely knit in terms of the family then I think you can but it has to start there. If you actually put all those pressures on your children in their teens then you are going to have problems. At the end of the day it becomes a way of life.

S: It is embedded.

P2: That's right.

S: I know I found – I might reassure you because there were some Pakistani children that I interviewed being very sure about being Pakistani in a positive way.

P2: Definitely; even my children they say – I always tend to ask them – what would you like to be – would you like to be Chinese, to be any other race? And they answer 'we are Pakistanis'. And it's the same with me – I can speak as well – even yourself because it's colour at the end of the day. We are labelled at the end of the day; we are foreigners regardless. Do you understand?

S: Yes – no I agree the immediate impression occurs.

P2: But because we are in a foreign country – we are foreigners I mean...

S: Well that's why people enjoy going back to India or Pakistan.

P2: I mean this is my country regardless of Pakistan or any ...

S: It's very confusing ...

P2: When you do go out there and when you do have to face these racial problems even it's very difficult. You think well after all colour matters as they say – it matters – it makes the difference.

S: People are responding to that?

P2: Oh definitely.

S: But as you're suggesting they are also responding to the way you speak?

P2: Definitely. It make a huge – I think it makes all the difference. I mean I've had a lot of conversations on the phone and then I've gone to this certain place and then they've looked at me and thought that's not him.

S: You're the wrong colour?

P2: I mean I just laugh at it ...

S: You're a bit surprised?

P2: Very; and it hurts – it does hurt. It's just the way it is – you learn to accept it.

S: But then you have a double dose – because there is also Islam – do you feel that Islam is portrayed quite negatively?

P2: It is – when it becomes fanatical it does.

S: But you're not fanatical yourself.

P2: No.

S: I remember you saying in a previous interview I had was that you felt that the sort of Islam that can be generated in ...[locally] can be a different sort from the one that you ...

P2: Yes it is a lot more fanatical here. I mean there are two Mosques here in ...; the main two Mosques and they 're always conflicting because every religion every one preaches differently. You know among Muslims there are so many different sects that we all preach differently. My aim is – I go to everyone-honestly I go to this one; I go to the other one and I was actually asked once– why did you go to that one; they practise this way? Well I 'm not there to...

S: What would be the differences?

P2: There's not much in it; it's just the way we pray basically at the end of the day.

S: It's just the ritual?

P2: The ritual basically – a slightly different...

S: It's not different ways of understanding.

P2: No, no, no – it's just practice – that's all it is. They read the same but practised differently – in practical terms. But it doesn't bother me I'm there to

pray to God basically; I 'm not there to make a certain priest happy because I go to his Mosque. I actually had an argument with someone the other day who said why do you go there – don't you know that they practise this way? I said look I'm there to practise the way I'm taught to practise and they're not going to tell me there you should be doing this. I'd just say well this is the way I've been taught and this is the way our family has and no one's going to. I mean people...

S: Is it quite a social centre then?

P2: It's a very big social centre – you'd be surprised.

S: People chat to each other?

P2: Well it's mainly about the Mosque or Islam or religion otherwise you can't talk about let's say which girl you're going out with tonight; that's not on. Do you know what I mean?

S: Yes.

P2: It has to be with your faith or your religion but I have to admit a lot of people do the opposite.

S: I was talking to a woman who said, that she doesn't like going down ... Road because there's a Mosque there. And if she hasn't covered her head even outside the area of the Mosque, somebody will notice; whereas if she's in another part of town it's not so critical.

P2: Yes. The only problem is that – I don't know if you've – obviously you don't really – I don't know what you preach or what your faith is or... But in the last say ten to five years when it comes to the lady she covers her head from head to toe and you may have seen that. But you may have noticed there's a lot more now than what it used to be.

S: Yes?

P2: It's a lot more and it's the younger generation who actually started this.

S: It's not the elders then? Why is this?

P2: I think the younger generation have actually started to realise that – regardless of – you know we can be as English as we can but we won't be accepted regardless so why not follow your own religion. Which keeps everyone – your community .. .and you'll have an identity at the same time saying this is what we are.

S: No that's fine – that's a good explanation.

P2: I'm very glad that they're actually doing this – it's a revolution in a way – as long as it doesn't get to a fanatical level – I wouldn't accept it then.

S: And do you think – you know sometimes there's a perception of Eastern countries or also of Islam that there's a bias towards men – you know male power? How would you answer that?

P2: Well let's put it this way; I'm gong to be a male chauvinist now (jokes) it's basically all over all walks – all different countries and it's always been this way that the man rules unfortunately – it's just the way it is; that the woman always takes second place.

S: And that's how it is now?

P2: It remains that way but it has changed.

S: How has it changed?

P2: It's changing in the western world because there's more opportunity here. If you live in an Islamic state you're dependent on your husband ...

S: Economically?

P2: Economically, financially – in every way and the respect side of the family . Whereas in this country basically if a woman is being abused in a relationship, but the family doesn't accept that; basically they're saying put up with that regardless there's always an option that she can actually walk away.

S: So there is an alternative.

P2: There is – which I love about this country. I don't always agree with everything ...

S: It's a very difficult...

P2: It is difficult – very difficult.

S: ... to decide – you have to have your own mind.

P2: You have to. A lot of people – even some of my friends – even one's who've been brought up in this country say; I'm the man of the house she does what I tell her to do regardless. I don't always think that way.

S: It's quite traumatic for the women...

P2: Oh definitely.

S: Who don't necessarily, who don't necessarily want to reject all their family – they just don't want to be treated ...

P2: The biggest burden for a woman is she comes from a foreign country; most of them ...

S: Yes like your wife.

P2: Yes she comes from a foreign country; she's left everything behind basically – it's sacrifice and her part in life is firstly...

S: Her husband?

P2: No her husband's parents; her husband's parents then the husband and then the rest.

S: Ah right.

P2: So it's a big burden but um...

S: But if it's a good family it's great?

P2: If it's a good family but it doesn't always work mind you – it doesn't always last – a lot of people have problems – we had problems. Because I'm the only son so it's always like that – I mean I don't mean about your mother in law or anything but um ... but I'm not going to say anything on tape. But we've had our problems I mean my mother – I would say most mothers feel that someone's taken their ...

S: Son?

P2: Their place and taken them away from their son basically. But – I mean it happens everywhere; this mother/ daughter-in- law relationship – it's like that everywhere.

S: But it's slightly different in your set-up because you are all expected to live together? Because I don't see my mother-in-law very often – I mean I like her but we've had to work at it for at least ten years.

P2: We've had our problems – I've had problems at the same time trying to keep the peace basically and it hasn't always worked but we've learnt to actually cope with it – adapt to it.

S: And your wife goes out to work.
P2: Oh yes.

S: So she had her own space.

P2: Yes and that's important because it's a very dull life at times – it can get very dull but I like to make them – keep them as happy as – I mean the children as well as my mother and my wife. I like to take them out individually.

S: Did they know each other prior to your marriage?

P2: Yes they did. But it's always different knowing someone; let's say for instance say Sophie Gool: I mean I know you Sophie Gool but if you came to live here it would be different. I mean to me I got married to an alien basically – I mean it is although I knew her; I mean it's different.

S: But there's not the expectation of everything having to click at the beginning.

P2: Exactly.

S: You know that it's going to be...

P2: A rocky ride definitely. It's just the way – life is like that – but ours is a lot more ...what's the word?

S: Lively?

P2: It's not only lively – it's – there's a lot more to it than just a basic relationship of being mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. And the thing is when the lady might come from Pakistan —she might have her own values and dress code even. And I might say I don't like this I want you to wear a mini skirt and she may think 'what!'- and I might demand it even – I might say you have to do it otherwise you're out basically.

S: So you have to negotiate.

P2: Oh yeh you have to. I mean me – being brought up in this country you have to be understanding because they come from a different world altogether.

S: And because men are given a certain power to say – well I'm not having that.

P2: I mean me personally I think that she sacrificed everything to come here – leaving everything behind for me.

S: No I meant lively in the sense that in terms of you two – you are both strong characters.

P2: Oh we are – she's a very strong person – she's the man of the house.

S: Ah.

P2: Yes.

S: Well I have a lot of respect for both of you. Um you've suggested that there are challenges the children face- we've been through that – you mentioned that the sort of challenges they might face in terms of being Muslim might be... what did you say?

P2: Well basically – possibly – it's all down – it all boils down to the religious side of it – your upbringing and everything.

S: But do you find that when you are at work – some people have mentioned – actually Bangladeshi people have said that they can't pray at work ...

P2: But as I've said a lot of my friends are very religious but I'm not so religious – I'll be honest with you. Nowadays the work places are actually accommodating people these days.

S: So that is a positive thing.

P2: Oh yes definitely even in the schools around this area all the children – even the young children pray within school hours. But I haven't actually pushed my child because it does get too much and I want my children ...

S: And it segregates them ...

P2: Oh definitely.

S: In an area which isn't really like...

P2: Oh definitely and at the end of the day all I want my children to remember is 'we enjoyed our life when our father was around and mother '. It doesn't matter , I mean children don't want to see buildings or cars or wealth basically

– they just want a good life that you can remember. I mean if you've had a bad life basically that's going to influence you wherever; I think personally...

S: So you think material things are not ...

P2: Oh definitely and unfortunately today people are very materialistic these days. People think if that person has got this I should have two.

S: Because it's not part of the religious side of life.

P2: No it's not – it's just greed.

S: And people just manage to somehow fit it in.

P2: That's right – I mean I didn't even – I wasn't going to get married to a Muslim originally; I was going out with this Australian, then it was a Greek and then it was a West Indian girl. But I was told no chance – you're either an outcast – well not an outcaste but we won't accept it.

S: So it was basically it was to satisfy them?

P2: But at the end of the day I think it was the right decision because I am happy at the end of the day but then I think what if I wasn't happy – so you know...

S: And you have the backing of your family, which does take...

P2: Oh yes, yes definitely. I mean my cousin he's actually gone and had a child with an English girl and he's nor married to her basically and his parents have actually accepted that, – and they were very strict.

S: Oh that's amazing.

P2: They said look we've only got one...

S: Is this [locally]?

P2: Oh yes on ...Road – ...sorry – and their son has actually had a son – a baby – last week and he's actually my uncle's son . And I've done all this negotiating because they actually kicked him out of the house and said you can't come back and he didn't want to come back in the first place. But once he had this child – he wanted amazingly – he lived apart from his parents for four years but he wanted to have his child to have Muslim identity; a Muslim name. But she didn't accept it.

S: Oh.

P2: She doesn't accept even his parents and now we're trying to make him understand that anyone can have children, anyone – you can go out with a different girl every day. But you can't find parents – you only get them once in a life and they can't be replaced. That's what I've made him understand. But I say you can't leave the baby because that's wrong – his parents have tried to say well that child is nothing to do with us but I've always said listen it's not his fault – he's the innocent party – he's seventeen.

S: And he's just trying to be respectful to the woman?

P2: Oh yes definitely. It's partly, well it's mainly his fault he decided to walk out on everything and said well I'm going to live with this girl and they said you can live with this girl but at least come home but he didn't. He rejected his parents – but the child I feel sorry for the child – it's not his fault he's come into this world he doesn't know who his mother and father is yet let alone their problems. So I said you have to actually...

S: Do you think that the parents are beginning to accept on some level something or not?

P2: Yes; they haven't got a choice any more because I give you a little example. Up the road there's a family and the father was very aggressive towards his children in terms of the religioun he actually tried to make them do things – well not do things – actually fuelled – well brain washed – well not brain washed – but pushed them to pray five times a day. And they just couldn't cope so they walked out. Five sons left.

S: Altogether?

P2: Altogether.

S: He was too rigid?

P2: Too much and me personally I think he was asking for it basically because you can't go over board – because children – it's just too much pressure.

S: Also because as you have only one lot of parents you also have only one lot of children.

P2: Exactly.

S: You are always going to have this connection with them.

P2: Exactly – it's the same basically. He was asking for it – everyone told him that; 'your children aren't not going to accept the way you are pushing them' and now he's on his own. His children left years and years ago and he's on his own.

S: So he wasn't able to negotiate.

P2: (next side of tape) ...and possibly understanding of the way of life not only here but as well as Islamic and Pakistani side. It's very difficult for anyone unless you are a Muslim/Pakistani – to understand.

S: So although you've got very clear guidelines to follow through, through the religion and cultural practices, the situation of living in England more than living in Pakistan – where presumably you have the culture around you; you are always having to make decisions about situations which your parents experienced?

P2: Definitely.

S: So everything has to be reconsidered a little bit?

P2: Reconsidered and parents have to understand that life at times has changed.

S: Do you think this is a positive thing?

P2: Positive thing? It's somewhat more civilised now – I mean people do understand that we have – I mean parents today do have to understand that we have problems being brought up in this country because we're being educated here. But because – well we have our own racial problems – I mean parents don't understand that; they don't understand that.

S: No I've heard that.

P2: They think that you're born here you are English; as good as English...

S: But they don't circulate in the wider society.

P2: Exactly they don't – that's what I mean. It's all down to the word society – which they've been brought up in. Alot of people do come from Pakistan and other countries and live with their own community, so they don't really know what's going on outside. They haven't been treated in an English workplace – so can they understand? they can't.

S: No they don't; people don't usually want to see problems unless they've actually been pushed to; they like to imagine that life is easier – it's the easier option – I think. And do you think there are any issues between Asian parents and the relationship between the school system. And I mean that I suppose with particular reference to, not to yourself at all, but that quite a few Asian parents don't go to PTAs or get involved with the school and how would you explain that? Do you think there are any difficulties there?

P2: There isn't any difficulty there; it's a problem with our community is two parents. The problem is that the only reason that they don't get involved the way they should do is because the man is always working. He puts everything on the wife and the wife might not even understand English but she has to attend the parent's evenings or let's say festivals; any concert or anything social in the school. But the father's always working so he's not really informed; all he does look at is the school report and whether it's good or bad and either they'll get punished or whatever. It's very sad.

S; So do you think it's also related to the fact that some of these parents can relate more to the Islamic education through the way their child is achieving in that direction?

P2: Definitely.

S: Because they have less knowledge the...

P2: It's their own knowledge I think; if they worked or were brought up in or even studied in the English side of things than they would take more...

S: Do you think that's going to change though?

P2: It is changing, it's changing because I'm seeing a lot more of my children's work and their reports and my mother even...

S: So you've changed?

P2: I have done, but I could do the same I could think why should I but everyone is an individual I think.

S: I am interested because I think that also and I think it's also hopefully changing; because I'm not into statistics but Sajidar was saying that there's an issue around Pakistani children still having lower achievement...

P2: It's I mean there's two problems, like I say. Parents play a big part in this, they don't take the English side too seriously..

S: Because you're unusual in saying that you put the school system in a very important position?

P2: Yes, they don't take it too seriously. I mean I'm one of them; my parents didn't, they always told me to push to go school and you have to do this or you have to become this– it doesn't matter what I wanted to do, do you understand? And secondly because of the Islamic side of things which is taken a lot more seriously and they tend to think that our Islamic side is a lot more important and it's a lot more disciplined, so it's more important – do you understand?

S: Yes I do.

P2: So that's the way it is unfortunately. But as I said I don't always do that. A lot of my friends and they were brought up in this country and they say Islam is the priority. I think it's an important priority but there's other things which they have to do; they have to live in this country and there are other problems that they have to face otherwise they'll be outcasts, they will be. I mean OK it's OK to cover yourself from head to toe you know but you have to – a lot of people think respect – I mean you must be thinking oh why am I saying respect. But a lot of Asians today don't respect other religions and think they aren't more important regardless. If you don't respect other religions how can you possibly get the same respect from others; you won't be respected. It's like that unfortunately, it's just the times are like this but they are improving definitely they are improving.

S: So what do you think then are the most challenging things that your community faces?

P2: Challenging things? (pause). Um ...

S: I mean I'm just wondering about the situations, about individual situations you've talked about – about the family that weren't married – the one you talked about and then the other man up the road who was too strict. I mean to what extent is the community – how much is it addressed. Is it discussed or considered, is it aware of these strains?

P2: It is aware of that; we do get lectures regularly at the religious centres that you have to understand our children today because there's a culture clash. I think you need more understanding and you can't just scream and shout and say you have to do this; you have to do that. And I understand that the only way you understand anything is when you are told quietly calmly – it's just the situation; make them understand. But you have to understand them because

we are in a modern society, we're not in an Islamic state or anything. This is an English country and it's so easy to ..

S: So you do get taught about that in the Mosque?

P2: Oh yes we do.

S: Because that's the sort of issue...
P2: But not enough, not enough.

S: So in a sense the community is aware of that particular issue but are there any others that you are aware of?

P2: Well that's it mainly – it's like most religions – you are taught that your priorities are your religion comes first than it's your parents and than it's your neighbours and then it's to respect all religions. It's just that these are the main three or four facts that they keep on repeating which is a shame really.

S: So the most challenging thing that your community faces – you were saying that they have to see that there's a wider world out there to negotiate with as well or move in as well. So the community addresses that but not as much as it could possibly? Do you think it worries about losing Pakistani identity at all?

P2: You can't really lose your identity – you can lose your identity if you change colour basically.

S: So you think it's very much a colour thing?

P2: Yeh I think it's ...

S: But different Muslims don't mix; Bangladeshis don't mix with Pakistanis.

P2: They don't but our life styles are similar. I mean I've worked with Bengalis and Indians and Hindus and I know what their life styles are like; we are all in the same boat actually.

S: Well also have the same family network.

P2: Oh definitely . Everyone who comes from a strong family, they always say priority number one it's the family – we are a very strong family you know.

S: But there must be something distinctively Pakistani as opposed to Bangladeshi?

P2: Um that's a good question. There isn't to tell you the truth; there isn't.

S: But people choose not to...

P2: The only difference between us and the Bengali community is what we do work wise. It's the only thing that separates us.

S: And what's that?

P2: Are you talking about [locally] or just general?

S: Whatever.

P2: Well in [locally] ...

S: They've got their catering?

P2: They've got this restaurant side of things but if you generalise about the Bengali community I think they are a lot closer. And they are a minority and they are more successful at the same time.

S: Probably because they are a closer community?

P2: They are and also because there aren't that many and plus they're working together.

S: While you're quite separated?

P2: Very separated, very at times very snobbish even. Even towards each other actually.

S: Is that to do with the caste?

P2: Not the caste- yes it could be – I think you're quite right – you've hit the nail on the head. Yeh definitely there is a caste system; there is also in the Bengali community but it's a lot stronger in the Pakistani and the Indian community.

S: So basically what happens is that people stay in their homes they mix with their own relations but they don't circulate in the wider Pakistani community because they- because they have different positions?

P2: Um it's possible yes I think you're ...

S: I am just aware that the Pakistani women's centre changes that a little bit.

P2: Yeh

S: But it's quite small.

P2: It is – what one are you talking about?

S: the one on ...Road where Sajidar works.

P2: I know the one yeh – my mother knows her.

S: She's very good actually but she comes from ...

P2: Yes that's right ...

S: So she's not so caught up with the differences amongst Pakistanis in this area. She's just aware of it but she's not living in it.

P2: I mean there's quite a community in ... but it's a lot closer here because there's a lot more of us. There's a lot more going on here.

S: And also she said that in ... in the Mosque it's a lot more relaxed.

P2: Very relaxed.

S: It's like they accept that it's only one hour instead of two hours

P2: That's right.

S: ...and sometimes the genders are mixed because there are fewer children. So there's things like that, that they've changed but here they're not.

P2: They're not because it's a larger community and because there are two Mosques and because they've got different ways they teach differently.

S: Do people mix with the ...[other] community at all?

P2: Um they have to come to ...[here] regardless if they live in ... to do their shopping, they have to no matter where you live [locally]...

S: To ...Road.

P2: If you are an Asian you have to come to ...Road – it's the place to be; it's like a sort of social gathering. Which is nice to see but um what can you say.

S: So um ...

P2: I think what you ought to do is come and live with us for a month or so – you might understand us then.

S: I almost feel that's an area, which I have not been able to do because I didn't manage to get to Pakistan. I went to the Punjab and I went to Bangladesh.

P2: There's not much difference. I am telling you ...

S: Living in those situations in Bangladesh and the Punjab I was very aware of the importance of the family...

P2: Oh definitely.

S: And positions within the family.

P2: That's right.

S: And then the position held within the community was all really clearly defined.

P2: That's right.

S: In a way it doesn't really occur in the west.

P2: The community is very, very strong even in this country because it's a western society you have to have to balance both and it's not as strict or as um, it's not as harsh here as it is there.

S: No I think and especially not in your sort of family but people will suggest that because Pakistan is full of its own culture and religion and things like that,

there's less fear of the outside world. So it's slightly more progressive there in some ways compared to these smaller communities here that feel quite threatened.

P2: Yes. But when you were saying about the caste system it's a lot stronger in India than what it is in Pakistan.

S: Well I thought that that's partly what Islam set out to diffuse.

P2: Yes it has done but it still goes on.

S: And people seem to want to ...

P2: People judge you – like I said people judge you in society and some people in this country will say well you know his ancestors were shoe makers – you know I mean silly things like that.

S: Oh yes they will judge you – even the way you speak.

P2: Definitely. They judge you for what you...

S: Or what area you live in.

P2: What area you live in or...

S: Oh yes so the last question was how do you see the future changes for the community or in what ways is it changing?

P2: The ways it's changing? Um the community – it's – there's a lot more understanding about our community than before because I think Asians are getting a lot more involved with other communities, the English community and they're actually turning up for these meetings and even school events and sports events or even other social gatherings. I think that we're just being more accepted than before. But do you find that as well?

S: Um I feel it's a bit polarised as well; I am also aware that there are very intense pockets of aversion to anybody that's different that exist in England that have become more intense as parts of the Muslim community have become more fanatical. And yet within that there's things like Goodness Gracious Me or the music, young people's music which includes Asian dub, and that does indicate that there's more of a fusion.

P2: Oh yes. I mean like I said all these pop bands I think they're very, very confused but um it's like that I mean I can't blame them because you know I mean it's so difficult for us. It's difficult for me – not so much for – I mean I 'm a twin, my sister is a twin. And I think it was a lot more difficult for me because I was the one going out there and seeing girls and things like that, and it was difficult for me to even accept our way of life. It's very difficult.

S: Do you see things like Goodness Gracious Me as a threat or do you ...

P2: All it is basically is taking the mickey out of our culture basically. That's all it does in a way – you know indirectly they are actually taking the mickey out of themselves basically.

S: What do you think about that?

P2: I don't mind it actually; if it makes anyone laugh and if they don't go over board. I mean even – I am sure you watch it?

S: Yeh I have done.

P2: And even the religious side of things especially the Hindu – the guru type I mean he's got these um bell type things. But if that was – if he was portrayed as a Muslim it would be taken not very kindly. But because it's Hindu and I've got to say one thing that they do take it a bit more lightly.

S: A bit more likely – well there are so many ways of being a Hindu as well.

P2: Exactly it's just the way it's portrayed it 's nice but he's still taking the mickey.

THE END

P3:Pakistani radical:
(who was originally FP3 see appendix two) and S: (researcher).

S: (Reads out introduction). Is that all right?

P3: Yes.

S: Right so first of all what I wanted to ask you is what is it like to be a Pakistani (pause) perhaps I'll ask you that later on. Would it be easier to talk about what it is like to be a Muslim? What does that feel like – how would you describe it?

P3: I am not that strict a Muslim?

S: Well even if you are not that strict I wondered what it might feel like?

P3: Well first of all I'll start off with food and the problem with eating Haram food rather than Halal food.

S: What d'you call it Haram- is that the other word for Halal?

P3: No Halal is good food and haram is other food. We can't drink at all or smoke.

S: So there are restrictions.

P3: But I'm alright about that.

S: So you keep to those restrictions but what you're saying is that you've chosen to?

P3: Yes.

S: And what about praying do you keep to those times?

P3: Well I do in Ramadan but I have other things I tend to do like work.

S: Right so you've got other things you need to do?

P3: There's just too much – far too much.

S: So you don't feel that if you don't pray that you're going to have a bad time in the next life?

P3: I'm not using God to get good marks and I don't see it like that. If I want go to God it's not to get good marks.

S: Do you think there's other people like you?

P3: Yes there's a lot .

S: Who just do it because? But why do they stay Muslim then – I mean I'm not ...?

P3: It tends to be the younger generations ...

S: Who think like you?

P3: But when we get older we suddenly feel like praying

S: So they suddenly change - but you are a Muslim ...

P3: But if I was brought to read the Koran every day it would be part of my daily routine.

S: You were given a choice?

P3: No – I went to Mosque at an early age I didn't wear my scarf or anything and it was my mother who was like keeping me going..

S: So your mother was the one who held up the Muslim faith – is that normal ?

P3: No because it's usually the men.

S: But your mother chose to...

P3: Yes.

S: And what about after your brother's death did that change things?

P3: I tended to be away from Islam but my mother said you should pray more.

(It was very difficult to hear what P3 was saying because she has a quiet voice and was sitting too far away from the mike – so we did another recording a week later)

START AGAIN

S: So basically I just want to clarify what I think I you said. Originally you said that you weren't a sort of conventional Muslim?

P3: Yes.

S: And your mother was the one in the family who encouraged you when you were younger?

P3: Yeh my mum was the one who encouraged me to go to Mosque and pray.

S: And I think I asked around that point if after your brother's death it changed the way in which you were dealing with your religion?

P3: It didn't change me; it changed my parents and my sister- in- law then. I think I said then that I became more distant towards the religion.

S: Yeh that's right I just wanted to make sure that you did say that.

P3: I don't want to be quoted on that. (laughs).

S: No I'm not going to use anybody's names anyway.

P3: It's only because I was put in such a situation. That's fine.

S: But for you, you would be consistently the same or would you be praying a bit more?

P3: No I just didn't believe, I mean what's the point – I mean he's going to die now so what's the use of praying. The only reason I'd pray was not to make him better but I don't know – take him away more quickly..

S: For his sake.

P3: Yeh to ease his pain.

S: Which was quite different from why everyone else was praying?

P3: Yeh; to make him better.

S: And also you said something very interesting at the beginning, which I was not clear about. About people being devout for the next life...preparing themselves?

P3: Yeh.

S: You said that you weren't interested in, to getting brownie points or that sort of thing.

P3: I may be wrong but I'm young now – you've got to enjoy life.

S: Fair enough. So later on it becomes more ...

P3: Yeh but that's what everyone tends to be like – when they're married and have children they tend to pray when they're middle aged.

S: Right that's fine. So what do you think - this was a difficult question last time, which you answered towards the end ...

P3: Being a Pakistani?

S: Oh no that was a different one – it was um what d'you think a child must acquire to become a successful person?

P3: Well I said a good education and being able to socialise with other ethnic minorities – not just their own kind. Because I I've noticed most Pakistani girls tend to stick to their own kind and I don't like that.

S: So you like the idea of people mixing?

P3: Yeh.

S: Right that's fine – and you mix with westerners as well?

P3: Yeh.

S: And that hasn't affected you badly?

P3: No I didn't go out and get drunk or smoke cigarettes or that kind of thing – yeh I'd keep away from that kind of crowd but you have to be aware of that crowd as well.

S: You have to get on with them as well?

P3: Yeh

S: Even if you don't want to socialise with them in certain situations?

P3: Yeh

S: OK that's fine. Alright we'll go back to the one you thought I was going to ask you (S and P3 laugh). Alright how would you describe being a Pakistani then?

P3: Being aware of the religion and how it helps us to lead a good life and stuff. And that it doesn't mean that if you socialise with other – White people that you turn out to be one of them and go out clubbing. You must always be aware that you're Muslim as well and you stick to your values and culture.

S: And in the culture values – being a Pakistani – which are the ones that spring to mind?

P3: The ones that spring to mind are don't go out clubbing and things like that.

S: Negative ones then – but what about any positive ones? I just wondered. Have you been to Pakistan?

P3: No.

S: Would you like to go there?

P3: Well yeh.

S: I mean d'you think that is part of your heritage really? Would it matter to you if you never went to Pakistan?

P3: Not really no.

S: But you still feel good about being Pakistani?

P3: Yeh I mean if I was going to die I'd still rather get buried over there than over here – I don't know why? I don't understand why.

S: No – I can understand that... strangely

P3: I haven't really delved into that – I don't understand that.

S: It's more of an instinctive feeling – that you belong there?

P3: Yeh.

S: That's there's something there that you belong to?

P3: Mmm.

S: Rather than perhaps British culture?

P3: Yeh I mean one thing I would hate is to um to be buried over here and no one ever goes to your grave.

S: If you got buried here and no one ever goes to your grave?

P3: Yeh.

S: So basically it's the idea that out there ...

P3: Out there you're with your own kind.

S: And they will respect you in your own way?

P3: Yeh.

S: You can be more sure of that?

P3: Yeh.

S: I suppose that's what it is – it's very important though isn't it. Um so what do you think are the most important things in terms of Muslim identity?

P3: (pause) Well there's different things for men and women.

S: Right.

P3: I will just stick to the women. What was it for – was it for the strict Muslims or for?

S: For you.

P3: (laughs). Well later on I'll become more religious.

S: At the moment?

P3: I think at the moment it's just sticking to – well at the moment it's to regain my faith more strongly (laughs) . Which I have gradually it's coming back every year since my brother's died.

S: That's been the trigger?

P3: Yeh – before I was more – I wasn't religious but I believed more in most of it anyway.

(Phone call and break)

S: What I want to ask you now is – do you think that it's acceptable then? I mean you've decided off your own bat to have a bit more freedom now and then become more religious later on.

P3: Yeh.

S: Do you think that's acceptable in the Muslim community or would they allow that?

P3: Well it depends because there's two sorts of – the way I see it there's two sorts of Muslim families; there's the ones that are literal; they are brought up really religious or what ever – they ...and they pray and they go to the Mosque and they do that and there are the others who haven't been brought up proper Muslims like myself – who haven't – well they have been to the Mosque but they haven't been forced.

S: They haven't been forced too heavily?

P3: Yeh – but they do go to the Mosque and pray – I know how to do that but they don't force you.

S: And what d'you feel - I mean is that alright with you that you haven't been forced?

P3: No – because I really wanted to um – I think the ideal family – I'd rather have is to be brought up strictly. Well I can't speak for everyone else - that's just me.

S: So but you've coped very well with your freedom?

P3: Yeh well I haven't taken it to the extreme –

S: And it was your own decision in the end.

P3: I've had the freedom and I haven't done anything stupid – I don't know perhaps it is because I'm the eldest?

S: But what do you think it is that keeps you being Muslim?

P3: Um (pause) - faith I suppose (laughs).

S: Which you're finding your way back to.

P3: Well yeh.

S: Not so much for now but for your old age?

P3: Mmm.

S: OK um in your family – I can't remember that – who was responsible for your school education and your religious education – is there one parent who..?

P3: I suppose my dad in that he was interested in our education – my mum wasn't.

S: Do you think that's usual – that fathers are more interested in the education/

P3: Yeh I think so. My dad wanted me to go to college and my mum just wanted me to get a job – she didn't want me to go to college.

S: Right so he actually liked the idea of education?

P3: Yeh.

S: OK. Um are you aware of any differences in teaching between the Mosque and the school?

P3: Oh yeh I remember when we touched on that – strictness and obviously you go to Mosque to learn about Islam and you go to school to learn all the other usual things I guess and being able to mix with other ethnic minorities. The Mosque can't do that – there you're there with your kind I don't know it could be seen as racism?

S: I don't know it could be seen as a retreat?

P3: I don't know but I did notice when I was about fifteen I think there were Somalians and there were Chinese or Japanese – I can't remember now.

S: There probably were Bangladeshis as well?

P3: Yeh there were a few Bangladeshis but you have to know the language and that to be able to communicate with the teacher as well. And their English isn't very good – well one of them is and the other isn't that good.

S: So they do tend – in the Mosque they will speak more of their own language?

P3: Yeh they tend to speak better in their own language – no they don't speak English. That's one thing I do feel is that you should be able to cope – you should be able to speak in your own language as well.

S: And do you think that it's also good to have a separate place, which is to do with your own religion?

P3: Well as I said back there it's good to socialise with other Muslims as well but otherwise you don't see other Muslims and they can live so far away as well.

S: Do you think that both types of education are equally important?

P3: Well I'm a Muslim and strict Muslims would just say definitely.

S: But you?

P3: I'd say yes again because um you do need to know Arabic for the Koran because it's difficult to teach yourself the language.

S: But in terms of the meaning of both of them?

P3: Well you do have to learn Arabic for the Koran when you're younger – because that's your mental age. You have to learn things when you're younger.

S: OK . So are you aware of any issues that may confront children now that didn't confront your parents – in terms of education in school?

(Break as someone enters the room).

P3: What were we talking about oh yes education – yes another thing I didn't mention was you know when you have to do work in groups and work with boys as well that 's another issue that Asian parents don't like and also about sex education as I said before.

S: So can you tell me what you said about sex education?

P3: Muslims just expect you to learn the day before your wedding – and have a bit of a shock (laughs) . But for instance my little brother he's aware of what sex is but he doesn't know ...

S: What happens?

P3: What happens and he just picks it up somehow.

S: Do you think he's learning at school as well?

P3: I think they do teach it at school – no they don't teach you about sex education at primary school do they – they teach you at secondary school? I can't remember actually.

S: I think when [my son] was at primary school - at the end of the primary school I did get letters asking me what I thought if they gave lessons.

P3: Right because they taught in the primary school what our periods were and they did a whole day's session and that was quite good because you tend to start earlier – around nine years old and I think there was a letter going round about that as well. And people were going funny about that as well.

S: They were going funny about that?

P3: Yeh there was one particular girl that didn't attend that session because it was too much and one thing and another. You do need to know about that and Asian parents don't tell you all the details now do they.

S: So anyway in that way you're quite independent about those things as well – in your mind any way.

P3: Yeh well my mum did tell me what periods were when I was about nine you do start at an earlier age – nowadays.

S: So those create issues for Asian parents in schools ?

P3: Yeh and nowadays Muslim parents try not to let the children out too much(laughs) just in case you go out with boyfriends .

S: So they don't like all the socialising at school as well?

P3: Yeh they don't like going out to town ...

S: So they're not likely to let their children go on school holidays?

P3: Yes – no actually my dad didn't mind me going to France – I just didn't go because I was coach sick.

S: But you have got a very broadminded family really?

P3: It's my mum she's really traditional and old fashioned.

S: But your dad ...?

P3: Yes but that's a weird thing he didn't mind us going to France but he didn't like us going to Alton Towers – that's a weird thing isn't it? I don't know why that was.

S: Perhaps he thought one was more educational?

P3: Yeh I think that was what that was.

S: Interesting isn't it – priorities.

P3: Or maybe it was the scary rides that scared him off? (laughs).

S: Scary what?

P3: Rides.

S: Right so he wasn't going to go there himself! Well that's why partly I was glad that [my son] could go because I wouldn't want to go there myself and I wouldn't want to supervise that either. But anyway – so what you're saying basically is that there are certain particular issues that confront parents in terms of what's taught in schools and how it's taught but also when people say Asian parents don't go into the school...

P3: That's what I meant – that's the only issues they care about – nothing else.

S: They just care about whether there's going to be sex education or whether the children are going to mix around too much?

P3: Yeh (laughs).

S: Do you think that they feel that they've got their own education going on any way? (pause). I mean do you think it's because of other agendas almost? (pause) than the school – do they just expect the school to just go ticking on anyway?

P3: Well for me I was just very interested in education but there was no one there for me to help me – I just had to do it all myself.

S: So it was your initiative?

P3: Yeh.

S: But on the other hand – they would have been interested – at least your mother would have been interested in ensuring that you had Islamic education?

P3: Mmm.

S: So it was more of a priority?

P3: Yes but now my little brother goes to ... school on Sundays because there's Islamic classes – goes there every Sunday and goes to Mosque Monday to Friday and gets out of the house for a few hours! (laughs).

S: But you didn't have that?

P3: No, no um there was Sunday class and um.
(Interruption).

S: So if we go back to issues that may arise for Asian children?

P3: Well when you're younger you're invited to parties and things – birthday parties and you do want to go obviously because you're a child but your parents will say no you can't go – you shouldn't be mixing and that you will end up eating something else and that you just can't. And then you have to just cover up your disappointment don't you and then when you're older and you have to ask your parents or go behind your parents if you do want to go. I didn't bother I just said blatantly – no I can't go – I've got to go somewhere else or make some excuse.

S: So you were always like having to reassure both parties?

P3: Yeh I did because if people tend to ask me out to parties or whatever I just used to make some excuse. And then sometimes – once when I was about thirteen my mum did ask me you don't mix do you – you haven't got a boyfriend have you? And I had to reassure her – I don't know where she got that message from?

S: So you were keeping the peace. But um do you think that's going to change?

P3: It has changed.

S: Children are just doing what they want?

P3: They do what they want with their friends – you have to. I mean I have to lie to my parents about what I've done.

S: Because you don't want to have them worrying unnecessarily?

P3: Yeh I don't know I think Pakistani parents are too strict.

S: So it doesn't stop people from ...

P3: No – I mean there's so many people I know that wear their scarves and then go off and do whatever...

S: But they don't actually want to lose their identity?

P3: Yes I think they do those types.

S: Quite a few problems around that – for young people?

P3: That's when they try to make sure that you don't hang around with the wrong crowd or whatever.

S: What do you think you'd do if you were a parent – how do you think you'd deal with it?

P3: I think I'd send them to boarding school (Laughs).

S: No seriously.

P3: I'm just joking.

S: I know I realise.

P3: I don't know - I am hoping they'd be a Muslim school nearer to me – I don't know I heard of some thing...If I have children I am hoping they'd go to a Muslim school.

S: But then how would they mix and get to know all the different people like you said you'd want them to do?

P3: I don't know (laughs).

S: Do you think you'd be a bit more open to ...

P3: I think I'd be more open. But I wouldn't like it if my little girl comes home with a boyfriend.

S: You'd probably understand their concerns differently?

P3: Of course. I mean if you go out to a party they can't understand – they've just been brought up differently in Pakistan...

S: In little villages?

P3: Or in a big town or a city – they just don't understand.

S: But also you opted to choose education – and you were allowed to some extent.

P3: Yeh.

S: You were allowed to put academic or school education before ...

P3: I'm the odd one out – I don't know why? It's probably because I wanted to show everybody that it's not just men who can go to college. I was student of the year at my college and everyone was shocked because I'm pretty shy and that I got that for two years and that I go to Uni – cos I haven't got anyone else to point me in the right direction.

S: It was just that you felt that was the way in which to ...

P3: The real reason is that I wanted to show everyone else that it's not men who can do it – women can do it one their own as well and can be independent.

S: So do you think that in the Muslim community...

P3: Yeh – they don't think about a woman's education; they just think about a man's education.

S: So they just think that with women they're just going to get married?

P3: Become a housewife.

S: You're not going to be a housewife?

P3: No way.

S: You're going to be equal?

P3: And that's one thing I don't really want just be a housewife.

S: So do you think someone like you would be helpful to younger people?

P3: Yeh I mean most of my cousins come to me for advice. But I don't think their parents like it...

S: But you're very respectable as well. You've had this freedom – but you've also chosen to be quite respectful to your parents. Am I right in thinking that you think that in the end it is quite an investment – to use that word – in the future by being Muslim?

P3: Yeh I mean there's more converting to Islam. I mean with the English people they go out and get drunk and do whatever they want but they've got nothing to fall back on and we've got our religion to fall back on.

S: It's like a whole philosophy of life?

P3: I think you should have something to fall back on, to push you back up.

S: You shouldn't always have to make decisions on your own?

P3: Yeh, yeh, I mean there should be something there to back you up so you're not on your own.

S: That what it gives you – it gives you that?

P3: Yeh.

S: And is it just the religion or is it the whole community?

P3: It's the culture.

S: Which you couldn't quite describe – but the Pakistani culture?

P3: Cos don't forget Islam is just the religion – Iranian culture is different.

S: So if you were talking about Pakistani culture –how would you identity it again? What is it that you were talking about that you can fall back on?

P3: Ah the ...

S: Is it represented in the community and the family?

P3: It is like other Asian cultures like if there's a mela – it's where other Asian's come and do traditional things and you stick to your culture as well. I mean it doesn't mean away from the way you dress – cos that's your culture as well, the way you eat – you can't eat pork.

S: Is it something to do with the family traditions?

P3: Well yeh things like arranged marriages – but that again is not just the Musiim culture – it's in the Indian culture as well.

S: Do you feel quite proud of being Pakistani?

P3: Yes.

S: But you're aware of limitations in terms of the community?

P3: Yes.

S: So how would you describe the community and what sort of issues do you think the community faces?

P3: Well recently as I said the racism. I think went too far. I don't really know the whole story but the way I read it in the newspaper – which always tends to turn it round- they um – the Asian community were pointing it at the Black community [locally] and now they said it's not us it's people from outside you know doing all the racial attacks – I think they could be right. but it certainly pulled the community together because as you know it doesn't tend to hold together.

S: It's usually all split up?

P3: Yeh

S: And was that Bangladeshi Muslims as well as Pakistani?

P3: No it was just the Pakistanis. The Bengalis were on their own. I don't really know because I haven't mixed that much. But I do know they coped well with it...

S: They pulled together.

P3: And don't forget there are two Mosques as well. So I don't know if the two Mosques merged but they must have.

S: They must have communicated about this to each other?

P3: Yeh.

S: And decided together how to deal with it?

P3: I'm not sure about that...

S: So basically the community can hold together?

P3: Yeh.

S: But what are your reservations about the community – why have you opted to keep it at a distance?

P3: Well there again it's just my education that has got in the way – I haven't got time and I don't really want to socialise with them as well.

S: Don't you find them interesting enough to hang around with?

P3: When I'm older I will.

S: When you need company?

P3: Yeh and when I'm bored out of my mind. (S and P3 laugh).

S: So basically the dominant people are – the ones who represent the community are quite conventional really?

P3: Yeh but there again I'm proud that there's a few people who will actually stand up for themselves as well. Usually they tend to keep out of the fight don't they?

S: What the ones who aren't going to go along with it all.

P3: Yeh. I've got friends who've got more involved with the community but I can honestly say I've never, ever really had the chance to get involved with the community and I'm never really into that sort of thing I tend to stay inside I'm a sort of indoor sort of person.

S: And you also have your own family don't you?

P3: Yeh.
S: I mean perhaps people don't feel like going out when they're happy in their own family as well?

P3: That's another things as well I wanted to say that in our family we really don't tend to go out. And when we do it's only to my aunty's house and that's like once or twice a year and that one thing I've hated is because I'd really have liked to go out to other places as well.

S: So it's a bit insular.

P3: Yeh I feel sometimes as if I'm just locked inside – in the jail.

S: So do you think the community is full of these houses that are locked up.

P3: Yeh.

S: So if someone criticises the Asian community as being too insular what would your response be?

P3: I'd say go for it I mean it is. I mean it's the truth and you can't hide from it. But then there are a few times when you do get involved with other families outside as well but I have noticed that Pakistani Muslims tend to keep to

themselves. But things have changed in our family as well because recently before my brother died my mum didn't really go out at all. But now because she really hasn't got anything else to do because my sister- in- law has got married again- she changed altogether.

S: So she's moved out more?

P3: Yeh.

S: And perhaps other people are moving out a bit more?

P3: Yeh. But I was going to say was that they don't like it if you have a man as friend – mean they don't mind girl friends but ...

S: Oh yes I remember you mentioned that. And also um going to Pakistan – what do you think parents want children to gain from that?

P3: To get the traditional culture as well obviously to meet their own families out there and I think they're trying to say don't forget about your home country.

S: OK if people say that Asian parents don't get involved with the school; they don't go to PTAs and things like that – why do you think that would be?

P3: The reasons were; they haven't really got time – they spend too much time with the family young children and they don't understand they don't speak the same language so...

S: Do you think that they might have other priorities?

P3: Yeh, yeh. And they don't care.

S: Do they feel that it's something they feel they're not very knowledgeable about as well?

P3: Yeh

S: What do you think your parents would want to hear if they did go? What do you think would be in their minds?

P3: Well I don't know – because my mum would just say yes or no to every single thing. And um there's other Muslims who are really interested in the school. It's only that they were born here, and they're aware and they understand it all as well and they really want to get involved as well.

S: So do you know of some young mothers who have...

P3: Oh yeh there are loads of young mums who understand and want to get involved as well but as I say maybe it isn't a priority – maybe religion is.

S: Religion is a priority isn't it?

P3: And family.

S: Yes that's what I would have thought and I would have thought it was quite unusual the way you have decided to educate yourself?

P3: Yeh.

S: But on the other hand I think there must be some other positive things that are chang...

P3: Yeh I think that in our Asian community it's the family that tends to come first.

S: How do they see the school – how does it fit in/

P3: A way of getting rid of the children for a few hours. I don't know I also think they don't understand and you do need someone there who understands and if they did understand they'd get more involved.

S: So it's understanding I mean it's difficult enough for western parents to understand there have been so many changes.

P3: Yeh , yeh

S: But your education has been a way for you to gain more independence?

P3: Yeh, yeh.

S: And yet you wouldn't reject the community – would you?

P3: Yeh probably .

S: So what I've understood about Pakistani culture is that it's around dress and food – what you can eat?

P3: Yes but you mustn't forget there's things in the culture about dress but then there's a strict Islamic culture about things like covering your head or whatever.

S: Would you put a scarf on if you went out?

P3: It depends where I'm going. If I was going down to ... Road then yeh – there's a Mosque there.

S: Oh cos there's a Mosque there – so even on the outside of the Mosque people are expected to ...

P3: Yeh. Didn't you realise that?

S: No sorry I didn't realise that.
P3: Yeh if my mum says go on go down [...] road and get some milk – I'd have to wear a scarf then wouldn't I.

S: Oh I see.

P3: And if people come to our house we have to wear a scarf as well.

S: So why aren't you wearing a scarf now?

P3: Cos you haven't got one on (S and P3 both laugh).

S: And cos I'm not obviously Pakistani! OK that's fine – is there anything else you'd like to add? I mean basically my area is trying to understand the complexity of the South Asian community or to give a portrait of that but also to understand issues in education around the Pakistani community. And as far as I can see in terms of the Pakistani community its priorities are that; it respects education in terms of getting a job perhaps?

P3: Yeh.

S: You haven't actually said that but I presume that they would?

P3: Yeh – I mean that's true but um they don't about the women – but the men they do.
And they want them to have a really good education and to get a really good job. But they don't really care about the women; they just want them to get an education so that they can get a job- it doesn't matter about university because they just want them to get married and have children anyway – so what's the point? That's how I feel.

S: That's how you feel; but somehow you still feel good about being Pakistani?

P3: Yeh (laughs) but can't say why.

S: It does get confusing but on the other hand ...

P3: I mean there's good points and there's bad points.

S: OK so what are the good points?

P3: (laughs) Put me on the spot.

S: No I just wondered there must be some things that are more enduring?

P3: I don't know I'm just feeling very negative – I'm just pointing out the bad things.

S: But also you've said that your family's a good family.

P3: Yeh I think the positive thing is that you respect elders and that's one thing that I've noticed about the westerners is that they don't tend to respect elders.

THE END

S1:Sikh spokesperson:
(who was originally RS1 see appendix one) and S: (researcher).

(Having read out introduction)

S: What I'd like to ask you is what is it like to be a Sikh. I know it's a big question but what comes to mind?

S1: The most important things is I think that it offers you some sort of identity and that's the most important to me. And it gives me the opportunity to practise my faith. Sikhism it's got to come from within and it's really my identity and to be at peace with yourself and your soul.

S: Right, that 's lovely. What is it like to be from the Punjab – or do you see yourself as a Punjabi?

S1: Only in the notion that that's what we're classed as Punjabis. But to me it's just like if you were from ... and it's no different than if you were from London.

S: Right so it's just a part of the world?

S1: It's just a part of the world for me as if you were a Londoner.

S: Because if you were filling in a form and you had to prioritise where your identity fell what would you put first in terms of your identity?

S1: What ethnic minority forms?

S: Mmm.

S1: I tend to put Indian origin because they ask you for your origin don't they?

S: And would you put British citizenship last?

S1: That's only if they asked for your citizenship. But if they asked for your ethnic identity I'd put Indian.

S: Would you put Punjabi if the option was there?

S1: Yes I would.

S: If you had the option would it go in the order of Sikh Punjabi and then...

S1: No Sikh and then Indian and then Punjabi.

S: And then British I suppose – do you class yourself as British?

S1: I do because I was born here so I've got automatic British citizenship. I am British to a certain degree but than it's where – if you know where your identity lies it doesn't matter. I could be born in Africa but I would still class myself as an Indian African.

S: So you would put that first very much. What is it that makes you feel so distinctively ...?

S1: I don't think I ever used to; I think recently as I've grown and matured with age I've just adopted it.

S: Right.

S1: I don't think I was ever – for example when the cricket used to go on I used to always vote for the British cricket team; now I think let's see how India gets on; come on India.

S: So gradually as you've got older you've got a greater Identity with your country of origin.

S1: As you're growing up you don't realise that because it's your motherland you have a greater attraction for it.

S: To go back to your origins.

S1: Yes

S: Is it also that as you suggest that it's connected with Sikhism?

S1: That's right – it's a lot to do with Sikhism because in order to have faith you have to know where that faith has originated from.

S: So have you been back to the Punjab?

S1: Oh many times and it helps having – I'm sure that people who – I'm married to an Indian and that has helped to establish my background.

S: So it's something – and what about your children?

S1: They feel very strongly as I do now but they haven't – again - the first time I was taken when I was nine and my kids have been taken to India every year and a half since they were a year old so...

S: That's given them a very strong link. Do you go back to Amritzar?

S1: Yes we go back to the Punjab and Amritzar is in the Punjab so we always pay if not one visit we pay two visits there. And because, the facility wasn't available when I was a teenager to be able to read and write Punjabi, and if you can't read and write then you can't communicate. Although I managed very well because my parents can't speak English; one of them can but very poorly and one can't and one can read and write but the other can't, so we developed our links with Indian with them because they couldn't speak English.

S: So you had a connection through them and they encouraged it.

S1: But my children because I speak English I have to find other methods of really making them realise where their origins actually lie. And they're doing it through learning to read and write Punjabi; they visit India frequently - every two years and again this faith – we come to the Gurdwara every weekend. They learn to read and write here and their father keeps them in- line. I don't whether to call it that but it is that to a certain degree.

S: I get the impression that it's more relaxed than if you were a Muslim child?

S1: Yeh.

S: In a sense that they go more than once a week – well not all the children either well some of them...

S1: I don't think Sikhs do either; there's very few families who – there's a lot of my friends who have children of my age; they don't send their children to Gurdwara and they don't send them to Punjabi class but I think it's because I've found there's something here.

S: Yes; you've been able to give that confidence or that knowledge or that sense of belonging to your children.

S1: Yeh.

S: But what I'm thinking of as well is asking a straight forward question of; what do you think parents would want their children to gather from visits to the Punjab; what do you think they'd want them to gain?

S1: To gain exactly where they have come from; where they have originated?

S: And what about the family; would they go back to...

S1: They go back to their grandparents.

S: So that's another link it's a mixture of the family and the faith and the origins.

S1: Yeh.

S: And it is a very different culture because having been there...

S1: It's amazing it really is. And I don't whether you've been up to ...?

S: No I haven't. That's the ...[area] in ....?

S1: Yes because ...[there] they have got these extended families in the British culture and my friends a health visitor. And she often talks of the fact that health visitors are really rejected in the ... community because they've got their grandparents who tell them about bottle feeding and breast feeding. And um the health visitor is like an intruder, everyone relies so heavily on their extended family; their parents and grandparents they have really no need for people coming in and offering them advice. And she was saying that a really good example was – she was telling me - that I went to visit somebody and told me that she needs to tell her that she was to demand feed and she said well you tell my grandad this before you tell me.

S: Yes so that puts it in perspective.

S1: So I think in certain communities you can hear that you've got that extended ...and that link with...

S: The extended family – but it doesn't – I mean [this area] seems to have a much more disparate – unclear group of Sikh community ? In the sense that [other area] must have more Sikhs – is that right?

S1: No I'm talking about White families; this is all White families.

S: Oh I see sorry I'm misunderstanding! So you're talking about the extended family in the White...

S1: White community.

S: But when I was looking at the Sikh community in ... because I was in ---- school there was one – it was difficult to find three Sikh children and only one of them was in year six – the year I was working in. The other two were younger, so I hadn't much time to establish a rapport. And when they came together one of them seemed to go regularly to the Gurdwara but the others didn't. And like you one of them had a problem with wearing Shalwar Kameez and it was very difficult- very strong sense of being Sikhs but it was very difficult to ascertain what it was. Because with the Muslim groups it was we do this, that the other. So how does the Sikh identity [locally]sit?

S1: Muslims – when their children are born from day one there are certain procedures that they go through..

S: Yes that's right.

S1: Very clearly laid out and the children know what the procedures are and they know that this is what makes them Muslim. But in the Sikh community there isn't that. The children will just have to gradually grow into their religion.

S: Because I noticed that there are some very articulate older people.

S1: And they pick up Sikhism from their friends, their family ...

S: Just playing together – it seemed more relaxed and they go to the Gurdwara and play with their friends; they don't necessarily go into to listen to the ...

S1: Well we try to teach them to pray but then there's problems because again with Muslims from a very early age they're taught how to read the Koran and Sikh children are not necessarily.

S: Yes it is a problem. So is it something they develop later on?

S1: Unless there's a very devout Sikh; like although we call ourselves Sikhs we can't actually – because in order to be devout we have to take our vows. And if we have taken our vows then within our vows we have a duty to teach our children about Sikhism.

S: Have you taken your vows?

S1: No. But um within the vows – built in duty to teach your kin.

S: But you choose whether to take your vows?

S1: You choose whether to take your vows.

S: People here wouldn't judge people ..

S1: Oh no far from it no. The priests have taken their vows and their aim is to get people as near to the Granth.

S: The Granthsab?

S1: The Granthsab as best as they can. They don't aim to get people to take their vows, although that's what they would like because that is what would make the Sikh community solid.

S: Yes would pull it together.

S1: Yes definitely ...

S: Oh dear my scarf has slipped off – you should tell me). [S and S are in the Gurdwara].

S1: But then after the last three years of the people who come to this Gurdwara only five of them have gone ahead and taken their vows. So that's the last three or four years and that's an awful long time really.

S: So is the Sikh community fairly stable, is it growing – or what is happening to it?

S1: I think it's becoming – since – um since the three hundredth anniversary of Sikhism Vaisaki – I think the Sikh community has realised again - yet again that they have to come together. And if they haven't already taken their vows they have to, in some way, get as many people to try to; to make it stronger as a unit.

S: Right but people are left a certain freedom?

S1: They are yeh and that isn't frowned upon at all.

S: So you've got that – there is a lot of cultural information, knowledge customs that you can find out about – that are there for you when you are ready to find out about it- it's more that way round?

S1: That's what they say, even if you go to take your vows they ask this is what you're taking are you prepared to take this out?

S: Mmm and you can say no not yet?

S1: You can say no, not yet yeh.

S: OK that's great that really helps me. Now if you take another sort of angle, which is going into the question about education but in the wider sense. What do you think are the most important things in a child's education?

S1: Well initially – the important things Let me think about this. Initially that they make progress and they reach the standard that has been set. Initially that is the most important thing.

S: What sort of standard? Who sets them?

S1: Standards – that they are reaching that they can read and write by the age of six competently.

S: Ah right, so they're from the school ultimately?

S1: Sorry yeh the education system. But I think the educational system fails to address issues.

S: Very basic issues?

S1: Very basic issues yeh and I think that's where it's got to start is that children – For example let me tell you, my son who's six and he's only just started to put pen to paper and actually write words etcetera. And for me that is the most important thing is that when they are that age; they need to have a very basic foundation; they need to be able to read and write sentences and read simple words.

S: You don't think it could come to them later in the way that the religion could?

S1: I'm sure it will but the earlier they pick up these things the more easy it's going to get...

S: Yes – they've got open minds and possibly find it easier to learn as well. So you would put reading and writing as the most important things in a child's education?

S1: Initially I think those are the most important things because that's going to open them up – in order to read and write that is the only way you can go forward.

S: So what do you think are the most important things that a child must acquire to become a successful person?

S1: Well that's a ...isn't it? They've got to be really confident about themselves. That again it's going back to your culture – how you look at yourself, how you view yourself. You've got to know where you've come from; what you're doing here.

S: Yes so how did you deal with that time before you became definitely Sikh. Before you adopted wearing the Shalwar Kameez and going to the Gurdwara regularly.

S1: I always went to the Gurdwara regularly but we always ...

S: But there was a side of you that was more interested – not more interested but was quite interested in belonging to the western community?

S1: I tell you what it was – it was because you weren't accepted in the wider community if you wore things like Shalwar Kameez and you felt as a teenager – you want to be accepted. And teenagers are very vulnerable, it's like peer group pressure, whatever you want to call it. But if you're not accepted in a community you feel reluctant to go and – I mean when you've not found your true identity you want to stick to the most easy method relating yourself to a certain group.

S: And were you actually attracted to elements in the western world?

S1: There were certain elements. I'll tell you what they were, they were again going to Christian clubs and things like that. I knew just as much about the Bible as any other White person and that attracted me to the White community. And even now I come to the Gurdwara and I still believe there is only one God.

S: You still have that link.

S1: I still believe that there is only one God however you interpret God.

S: Right, so you weren't attracted to the elements of freedom or ...?

S1: No I don't think I was, no.

S: It was – you were always drawn more to the religious elements?

S1: I was, freedom was – it was something that was luring you that way – it tries – if you're walking along the road and there's a certain little road coming off you might be tempted to follow it to the left or to the right just to see what's around the corner but ...So that aspect of things is a temptation isn't it.

S: It's also considered to be quite important in this society because you have to make decisions on your own and to do that you have to have an understanding of the options.

S1: Yeh that's right.

S: So it sort of puts us into that way of ...

S1: But I think things have changed so much since when I was a teenager. Somebody asked me the other day what would you do if your child went off and married a White person and it's become so common now. It's become so common and I really had to think about it and I thought well if they did then there would be nothing that I could do about it. What their decision was I couldn't do anything about it. I wouldn't want that but if that was their decision than I'd have to accept it. There's no other way round it really.

S: You wouldn't want to lose your child?

S1: Yeh that's the main thing I wouldn't want to loose my child. Ideally I would like him to keep his links with our society and with his origins and that would mean marrying somebody from the same...

S: Standpoint – belief?

S1: Yeh.

S: Or identity?

S1: Identity – yeh.

S: So um ...

S1: It's so easy for you to lose your identity. I can see in the rooms downstairs – you can see people who've come to the Gurdwara because they've been asked to or invited you can, those completely aside from those who want to be there.

S: That's quite an openness to be able to see that.

S1: Yeh.

S: It means people are expressing themselves quite differently.

S1: Yes that 's true but you can see that the people who just come because they've been invited or have come for any other reason – very few – I may be a little judgemental – but very few – unless their parents have really strong links with Sikhism and they've been brought up that way – people who get married here – very few have got that link with the Gurdwara. So I'm saying people who marry Indian people from England rather than abroad. I think that's partly why I have such a strong link because I married somebody from abroad. I'm sure if I married somebody from here, an Indian from here, a Punjabi from here I don't think ...I don't know.

S: No it's difficult when everything is in such states of transition. I mean you have got more Gurdwaras than you had before so there's something that's affirming in that. It isn't suddenly sort of petering out. A reason may be that people are dealing with it at different levels.

S1: Yes. They are.

S: So what do you think are the most important things in terms of a child's Sikh identity?

S1: Initially I think your Sikh identity relies upon how much you understand about your Sikhism.

S: And if you don't understand that – which the children I talked to didn't - where does that put you?

S1: It makes it more difficult for them but I'm sure ....um

S: Just because they want to say that they're Sikhs even if they're in the minority as well – which is quite a struggle.

S1: That's right if they can admit that they're Sikhs I think that's a huge step – to know that they are a Sikh – some kids don't know that they are a Sikh. You know what culture or faith you belong to. Some people don't know. So if they know that they're Sikhs, makes some relationship. Because I'm, some of them think well why are we at the Gurdwara?

S: But do you think also that apart from being in ...; if you go to the Punjab you get a sort of belonging in a different way?

S1: It's easier to belong in the Punjab, it's easier if you live in India than if you live here. And people who are born and bred here and who haven't been to India

and who go to India as teenagers love it. Some of them they can't even speak Punjabi; it's just the fact that you immediately belong there.

S: It gives you a feeling of affirmation?
S1: Yeh.

S: OK so I asked you what was important in terms of a child's education and you answered in response almost to a question I was going to ask you later which was what do you think is important in terms of school education. You opted to talk about education in relation to the institution. So you've already answered that question in some ways – and you suggested reading and writing. But are you aware of different ways of teaching between the Gurdwara and the school? Different expectations?

S1: Initially – well I suppose it depends where you are. You see ...[this] school – although they've got quite a large percentage of Asian and ethnic minorities, you've got your Blacks and you've got your Hindus and you've got your Sikhs. As much as they've got that huge percentage – minority children I don't think they acknowledge how they would need extra input. There aren't any Black or ethnic minority teachers there.

S: I've been working at ...which has one ...

S1: And that would be one of the first things I would look at if I were a manager, deputy head or head. I'd look at them and I'd say I've got a huge number of ethnic minority kids and no real role models really.

S: Right.

S1: And that's really failing Sikhs and the system because you're failing your ethnic minorities because you haven't supplied that. There's nothing there to say that- I was the same – there was one Sikh teacher and I thought wow there's a Sikh teacher. Otherwise you think well obviously Sikhs are very thick because they can't get anywhere.

S: Oh I see.

S1: Because it's things like that isn't it.

S: No leader or representative.

S1: No representative.

S: Spokesperson. But in the Gurdwara that's where it is I suppose?

S1: Well in the Gurdwara although you wouldn't be able to necessarily teach anybody – well I suppose they could – teach Punjabi or Hindi. But in the Gurdwara that there is going to be ...teacher here – not necessarily of teaching background. To the kids they're classed as a teacher they don't know what that teacher is.

S: But here in the Gurdwara if they teach here how would they teach?

S1: They teach as they would in India.

S: So that's a little bit strict?

S1: Not that really strict because in India they're not really that strict. So I think even in India things have started to mellow a little bit.

S: Possibly more than in Pakistan. I'm not that sure, the children talked to me about how strict – the Sikh children didn't because they hadn't been there....

S1: The school that I went to it was an English school – see there you go again. They have English schools in the Punjab. And if you can afford it you go to an English school.

S: And they're more broad-minded?

S1: Yeh so you don't have things like a ruler on the hand. There's punishment – there are punishments – it's things like staying late, doing extra work or ...

S: So the teachers who come here do they have an expectation that children are going to be very obedient?

S1: I don't think so because the teachers who are here; there was one teacher who used to teach here and she used to have that expectation because she used to teach in schools in England as well so she really knew what the standard was.

S: And it does seem more relaxed in the sense that the children don't have to learn Punjabi. It's more if their parents encourage them and if they feel good about it?

S1: It's the same with anything – if there's nobody to identify yourself with it becomes that much more difficult.

S: The good thing is that they can always find it later on in life?

S1: They could.

S: When they feel clearer about it?

S1: They can, yet I think it's going to become more and more difficult I think.

S: Do you think it is?

S1: I think it's going to become more and more difficult because we are now the second generation here and I was first generation here. And we tend to rely on how our parents have informed us and I haven't got quite that strong link that my parents have and I suspect that my children are second generation and unless I can really lay down the foundation for my children, their children...

S: There is a feeling that it may become less and less clear? More in the minority?

S1: I'll tell you why. As I said this Gurdwara has been open for coming on to five years or six years and as I say in that time there's only been five or six people who have taken their vows. And those five people have only started to read the Granths. We have people who come from abroad as was the person who

came in earlier. He had sessions on Tuesdays open to anybody who wants to learn about the Granthsab or reading or also the singing of hymns and the instruments.

S: So there's that dimension as well.

S1: So we have to – the church has had to rely heavily on having Guernys from India.

S: How do you think you spell Guernys do you think?

S1: Gi – Giani. So we have Giani come from Punjab and we always have done. So when this church first opened - when the Gurdwara first opened we – the community did as best they could and knew there was something missing and we started to help the Gianis come over on visas. So they stay for six months and then they go again and this has happened for the last four years.

S: So that 's quite effective?

S1: It's really effective because the people who are in their late forties are now starting to think – are the people who are starting to take their vows and it is their children who are starting to come to the Gurdwara. Because the Gianis – they teach about Sikhism, they teach about the Granthsab and if they didn't come over from India...

S: Do they make it quite applied in terms of...they use the Granthsab as the base line ..

S1: They do – they apply it through conversation – is that what you're talking about – sorry?

S: No I mean are they making it relevant to people's lives as well?

S1: It's brilliant how they do it. You can go downstairs and sit in the food hall and they'll start talking about the Granths and if you've done something they'll say – do you realise that in the Granths it says bla bla bla.

S: And discuss it with you?

S1: And discuss it with you and they'll teach you. Like my uncle he's taken his vows for the last three years. And every time you sit down with him he teaches you something different.

S: So it's like his wisdom or fount of knowledge.

S1: And we're just really appreciative of the fact that he's Giani and goes from India to England and really it's a blessing that they can come over and they can teach us about the Granths and really lay down a foundation for our identity.

S: Because it is quite different when you're in the Punjab – definitely. I mean because in some houses you go into ...[locally] people have pictures of the Gurus and you know there's not supposed to be pictures – technically. And that's quite interesting the way people have adapted the religion in different ways. In some ways they might need that sense of affirmation around them.

S1: Well right, that's it.

S: So they have been able to adapt it – I mean nobody's going to come in and say you shouldn't have pictures on the wall.

S1: No, no.

S: Although the Granthsab has this idea that you shouldn't....

S1: That's right it should always be from within.

S: Yes so that business of from within also gives a certain capacity to decide as well. It's not just this 'you must do this full stop'.

S1: No.

S: So there's a bit of – it would be ideal but then it's up to your particular...

S1: But then it's the same about pictures – even in the Gurdwara here there are so many pictures on the walls.

S: Yeh – it's different. It sounds as if in different places people adapt the religion to adapt to different issues – to the things that are more pressing in the area or environment. Because in the Punjab there are different issues.

S1: That's right. Although there you know that at four o'clock in the morning all you are going to hear are the bard.

S: Yes or outside the Golden Temple there are hymns all night. So it's different – very different. So what – are you aware of issues that may confront your children that didn't affect you or your parents in terms of education?

S1: Well I think that we've confronted a lot of the issues that ...

S: That your children have confronted.

S1: Yeh.

S: So in some ways you are saying it's easier for them because ...

S1: Because you see my parents never knew about ... You used to come home and you used to say – oh I think I'm being treated differently and they'd say it's all in the mind because they'd never been out there... and lived it.... Now I've lived that; I've lived through how White people are treated differently to ethnic minorities. And it's made me stronger as a person but my parents ... believed that if you're OK everybody else is OK.

S: So you also had to always put up this front as well?

S1: Yeh. It wasn't because ... people had that notion because they used to go to work – my dad did – Oh yeh he said there is a White person who needs to never give notice for holidays when he wanted them. And it's things like that. But they've not actually lived – we've lived through it; our children are living through it but our parents haven't.

S: No; perhaps also some parents also understand the dilemmas? I mean do you think that some children have to confront things in terms of their identity as Sikhs that are very challenging?

S1: Sorry can you ask me that again?

S: You know do you think there are challenging things that Sikh children have to confront in the wider society – about their Sikh identity?

S1: Is it more challenging?

S: Yeh.

S1: I think it is because ...we're going from generation to generation and we're still over here and the gap between my children and India is wider than between myself and India. So it is going to be more difficult for them and it is going to be more challenging for them.

S: To maintain that Sikh identity and to, why to as well?

S1: Yeh.

S: To feel a need to sometimes – but then people as you suggest might turn to it later on in life rather than in their earlier years?

S1: That's right – when people actually turn to it then it's going to be – because they've actually turned to it - because they actually want to – rather than because they've been indoctrinated.

S: Yes that's right.

S1: I think they're going to accept it more – because I was never forced into it and that's probably why I've got clearer ideas about what I am doing and where I want to go in terms of my religion.

S: So do you think there are any issues that Asian parents face – I mean not your parents in terms of the fact that they're another generation – but that Asian parents nowadays face in terms of their relationship with the school system?

S1: As I say there are lots of issues because um – although my children they used to speak Punjabi up until the time they went to school and my eldest especially he didn't know how to say – I'd like to go to the toilet in English. And he went to nursery and he didn't know what to say and he picked it up gradually. Whereas other children of his age group were managing to converse and um...

S: Blend in?

S1: Yes blend in and that made it a bit more difficult and that was knowledge of the fact that he would have to have extra input. And although they had one bilingual teacher who had the kids for one hour a week or two hours a week. She actually maintained that they kept their links with the Punjabi language and also taught them things about the English language.

S: So that's quite unusual – which school was that?

S1: That was....

S: That's good – so there was an attempt to maintain that.

S1: There was but...

S: But the parents themselves not coming to parents evening. Because that's always something that teachers bring up.

S1: I don't think it's such a big issue now because you see Asian parents want their children to do much better than the White parents want their children to do. OK I'm not saying that the White parents ..I think it's almost as though... the... White community they know that OK their kids will go to school and then they'll go and get themselves a job. And. ..well let them do as well as they want to ...it's nothing ...but we actually rely on the fact that our children will go to school and they need a good education and hopefully they'll come out with a job eventually and hopefully we can leave work and don't have to worry about them. Because we worry about our children up until university – out of university and then in good reputable jobs and married. Very few English families have that strong ...

S: Sense of having to see them through?

S1: Of having to see them through and um I don't know but I've heard of very few parent swho don't turn up for parents evenings in evenings. In fact the ones who don't are normally the White families.

S; There is also the Muslim community though.

S1: And I don't know but ...

S: Because quite a few don't speak English – I mean more Sikh parents do speak English and they do feel more acquainted with the educational system.

S1: I see what you mean.

S: There is a difference and it seems that the Muslim community is so concerned with its education of the children in the evenings anyway, and so caught up with the education at home: life and behaviour as well that they feel like foreigners going into the school – it's a very different world. They can't make that contribution – something they don't have time – I don't know?

S1: I suppose the other thing about the Muslim community is that they tend to intermarry and because they need to marry within their families ...because they do that ...

S: Not just arranged marriage as you have?

S1: No they have to marry cousins.

S: Oh right ...

S1: And because they have to do that I think a lot of Muslims have to go to Pakistan and bring back a partner. So there is a greater influence of um...

S: Non English speaking members of the household?

S1: Among Muslims rather than Sikhs?

S: But also lack of familiarity with the educational system, not just the language?

S1: Yes I suppose so but that would come from the fact that people come from Pakistan.

S: But how much do you have to do with your child's education – I mean how much do you get involved with the system – or would you – with things like homework?

S1: I get very interested. In fact I'll be completely honest with you I've taught them less about their faith and religion and more about their education.

S: So you've had to prioritise?

S1: And honestly say that whereas religion and faith play a very important part to me. The only thing I do is that they listen to the bard with me in the evening and could be sometimes at breakfast they are listening to the bard but they know that the bard can go on in the morning and they know ...

S: The bard if the...

S1: The reading...

S: That's bard

S1: Bpath. It's a Punjabi song in the morning and after school the evening bpath. And they know that that's the only link, other than if I want to sit down and read a bit of the bible and I won't...

S: By the bible you mean the Granthsab?

S1: The Granthsab and although I may want to sit and read the Granthsab for fifteen minutes or so I won't force them to come and sit down with me but I will force them to do their homework.

S: Right.

S1: I will force them to read a book and let me listen to them and if they haven't finished it in time I will want them to finish it the following morning and hand it in completed.

S: Right so you feel strongly that they should be committed to their homework and their school education but you hope that with this background of Sikhism coming into their life regularly that they will know about for the future in their lives.

S1: Yes.

S: What do you think it will offer them?

S1: Sikhism?
S: Yes.

S1: I hope and pray it will offer them what it has offered me. And that's this closeness; this togetherness and er...

S: Closeness in terms of people coming together?

S1: Yes and knowing what you are and where you come from and how important that is.

S: Well it is when it has a lot of meaning attached to it.

S1: They don't lose that and I don't think they will but ...

S: You introduce it in quite a gentle way really.

S1: I do. The only thing I do force them to do because on Sundays they have to come to a Punjabi class here. I do force them – not necessarily force them because if they don't want to come they won' but they know now that kicking up a fuss might not do any good. I'm going to go and they're going to have to sit at home by themselves so they can't ...But because it's been happening so regularly it's become part...

S: Part of their lives?

S1: Yeh and they come here on Sundays they would go to school on Monday.

S: And do you think they enjoy the social aspect – are there other children of their age?

S1: Yes and I think it's easier nowadays because whereas previously the classes were small and nowadays the classes have attracted more and more.

S: Oh so there is that development.

S1: Yeh.

S: So even though you mentioned a slight anxiety about things petering out because people haven't taken vows and because there's a greater distance from India – there's still more people coming.

S1: There's more children now coming to the Punjabi class than there were a year ago. But it's the same ones really who've attracted other...

S: How many would you say?

S1: I think initially there were only about seven families. It started really well – I think we had twelve families initially and then it went down to about seven and the same seven families brought their children in every Sunday and now it's started to increase again. There's probably several downstairs if you want to have a look at the lesson which is in progress at the moment. I would imagine that there's about sixteen families now.

S: Oh wow. But also you have other...

S1: And it's mainly – can I just say?

S: Yes do.

S1: It's mainly grandparents who'll bring in their grandchildren.

S: Oh that's interesting. Mothers must be quite busy?

S1: Mothers do come but it's actually grandparents who actually force their children to come.

S: Interesting. But also you have other Gurdwaras up the road that quite a few people go to.

S1: Yes there are.

S: And would they go to the Punjabi classes here?

S1: No they go to the Punjabi classes there.

S: So they have Punjabi classes too? So how many Gurdwaras are there in this area?

S1: Four.

S: There's four and so two...

S1: And the only – oh no I tell a lie because there's the Asian community centre on ... Road, the Sikh ... centre.

S: Is that a Gurdwara?

S1: I don't think they actually have Punjabi classes now at the other two Gurdwaras they actually combine them and they actually have Punjabi classes at the Sikh community centre.

S: Oh right but you were saying that that's a Gurdwara in ...– the Sikh resource centre?

S1: the Sikh resource centre in ... is not a Gurdwara, no.

S: But that's a centre.

S1: It's a centre and they have Punjabi classes there. Whereas the Giani here teach you to play the instruments they have the same teaching there but on a different day.

S: Oh right but they don't teach the instruments?

S1: They do.

S: But the Gurdwaras, where are they based?

S1: The Gurdwaras are really again casted. It's that big wall it's very difficult to break that wall.

S: So you've got the one up the road?

S1: One up the road here which is probably a mile away another one in a mile and a half and there's another two miles away.

S: So they're all up one road?

S1: No they're all in different directions. Like they're all quite close in a three mile radius.

S: But not within ...

S1: One is in ... One is on ...Road.

S: Oh right there's a Gurdwara there and I haven't even noticed it.

S1: There's one on ...Road.

S: And then there's these two here.

S1: There's these two here which are quite close together. And they both fall into ... [this area].

S: So people could walk to a Gurdwara they wouldn't have to come – it depends on their caste?

S1: Well before this Gurdwara – this Gurdwara has been here five years and before this Gurdwara we used to go to all three of them We had no close link with any either or...

S: So why did they build another one?

S1: It was because although we were already three we had no close tie with either of them.

S: Oh right so you're another caste?

S1: We're another caste yeh the Jut caste and saying that we don't actually call this a Jut Gurdwara the Kan actually call it the Kan Gurdwara. And the Bardra call it Bardra. We don't .

S: So what are the different – if you translate it into English what do the different castes mean?

S1: The Jut caste originally were the landowners. But this isn't a Jut Gurdwara because we don't want it to be a Jut Gurdwara. We haven't called it a Jut Gurdwara as have the Bardra.

S: And what are the Bardra?

S1: In fact low caste. They do things like – they are the servants.

S: Would they come here as well?

S1: They do.

S: They ignore that side?

S1: They ignore that side because that's the thing with Sikhism – when you take your Sikh vows ...

S: You rid yourself of the caste system?

S1: There's no caste.
S: Because that what was supposed to happen originally.

S1: That's it.

S: But old habit s die hard – so it's just in theory...

S1: See when you take your vows there is no caste. It's just Sikhism that's all it is.

S1: The origins of Sikhism arose within an Indian context and with it, it acquired a system of customs and beliefs ...

S1: And the casting as well but then ...but then you see we've had Giani in this Gurdwara who've been Kan; who've been Bardri.

S: Oh right so Giani can come from any caste?

S1: So that's the thing about Sikhism it doesn't – if you're a Sikh if you're talking about – they what caste they come from if they come from the Bardri caste or from the Kan caste or the Jut caste.

S: Can they change caste?

S1: No you can't change caste.

S: Not change caste but they can ignore it?

S1: Yes – but that's only if you take your vows – you have to ignore it – it's within the vows.

S: That's interesting.

S1: It's within the vows that you don't – that you adopt no caste – you have no caste.

S: So finally then – the final question that I wanted to ask you is 'what is the most challenging thing that your community faces?'

S1: I think the most challenging really would be is that – trying to keep the youth linked; associated with their faith.

S: You think it's more challenging then?

S1: I think it's definitely a challenging thing. To in some ways have the youth of today - um - have some relationship with the Sikh religion.

S: And why is it more challenging?

S1: It's a huge challenge because it's so easy, because there's so much freedom out there as you say. Freedom is so – I think that's probably why so many Indians come across here because they think it's going to be so free. But it's not until they realise that it's not so free. It's free for – you don't have to, you know I think it is so attractive isn't it?

S: Mmm

S1: To be out all hours and to have nobody worrying about you at home. I think that is so attractive to the youth today that that's why everybody wants to move away from religion and their Sikhism.

S: But that's also why some Sikhs by contrast, have become rather strict as well – which doesn't necessarily assist the situation?

S1: No it doesn't.

S: It's a very difficult balance isn't – to not panic too much so that you're inflicting something; to still keep it going and not just let it disappear. But as you suggest more families are coming and at Vaisaki there was a recognition...

S1: There was a huge – all the Sikhs came together at Vaisaki and it was such a –if you go to India and you set foot in Delhi - you know that this is your home..

S: You feel that you're accepted as you are.

S1: When it was Vaisaki here it was the same feeling. And when – I don't know if you went to Vaisaki?

S: Well I went to some of it – I went to the women's meeting.

S1: When we had the um – the jelus which is our ...(pause) festival – when we had the festival and we had our floats and English people were standing across the road and watching us; we felt so strongly. Everybody felt so strongly and they were so proud to be Sikhs. But it took the last couple of years to organise. But it was so brilliant everyone came together and everybody had a sense of belonging. They knew why they were there, everybody knew why they were there, even the children. The youngest children they came out with their orange headscarves, head wear, head dress. Everybody knew why they were there and kids knew why they were there because they'd been taught for the last few weeks in Gurdwaras and at home – the significance of the Vaisaki.

S: Yes that 's good..

S1: And leading up to the three hundredth anniversary there was such a ...

S: There were some interesting discussions on the television programmes.

S1: There were television programmes.

S: I'm just intrigued how the children with very little knowledge of what Sikhism is – don't necessarily have the music on as you have or the songs, prayers and hymns at home and things – they don't necessarily want to wear Shalwar Kameez either – but they'll still say they are Sikhs. There must be something in it, which they identify with? Being Asian or something like that?

S1: I am so pleased about that.

S: I can't tell you any more precisely. And it's quite difficult to access what it is.

S1: Yes.

S: To be clear and that they would like there to be more Sikhs around because then they wouldn't feel so much in the minority. I think that things are changing though because I think there are more children who wear their – what is it called – for the boys?

S1: The Gooti.

S: The gooti then there was before because it 's less embarrassing for some of them.

S1: It's really brilliant because the teenagers who've kept their hair long – it's really brilliant because they are like role models for our children.

S: But it is hard for them.

S1: It is hard for them. My husband had his haircut when he came to England and he's now grown it again.

S: So you can do that as well?

S1: He's started to grow it again and now he wears a turban.

S: I must say they are wonderful things. But one thing I found slightly disconcerting was that when I went to the women's session around Vaisaki last year; quite a lot of women turned up and you had one or two speakers – and it was good – it was well organised – there was a lovely list of names with the meanings of names; but there was a discussion and there were these really lovely young Sikh women – teenagers who behaved respectfully and everything and turned up but when they questioned anything especially the meaning for women.

S1: Yes I was there.

S: The same meaning – which men who I talked to who are scholars in the university of Amritzar were aware of and who were quite open about the limitations about certain things that are laid down; and they were quite happy to question it. But at this session there was a very sort of strict feeling that - there was a reaction about these things being brought up. I felt that things can't go on like this – young women won't take that lack of reasoning and exploration.

S1: Yes I agree.

(At that point the tape finished. S & S1 continued discussing ideas and S1 described an incident in the Punjab at her father-in-law's funeral. At the funeral the older women there had started wailing in a very obtrusive and inappropriate but traditional way. (It was inappropriate for two reasons; firstly because her father-in-law wouldn't have liked that ostentatious behaviour and secondly because he'd been murdered and had experienced a very violent death and it was necessary to be calm and not melodramatic). S1 told these women to stop wailing and beating their legs and told them that they should be listening to the prayers. And they did stop and later the Bard reassured her that she'd done the right thing. She understood that because she was an outsider (relatively speaking) she was not tied to these women so that they could assert too much power over her and therefore that she could have a more independent voice and voice a different perspective; that she could be more concerned with the ideology of Sikhism – and less with traditional culture- though obviously the precepts are also important.

THE END

S2 :Sikh member:
(who was originally FS2 see appendix two) and S: (researcher).

After reading out introduction

S: Is that alright?

S2: That's fine yeh.

S: So the first question I would like to ask you is 'what is it like to be a South Asian or Punjabi?' If you don't feel able to answer that we can return to it later.

S2: What does it feel like to be... ?

S: Punjabi – not so much Sikh because that's to do with your religion.

S2: So Asian?

S: Yeh – how would you describe being an Asian person?

S2: The thing is we've always been Asian so we wouldn't know kind of – we wouldn't know anything else because that's how we've been.

S: And living in England, you've always lived in England?

S2: We've always lived in England so...

S: But you prefer living here then when you were in East Anglia?

S2: Yes that's to do with racism because down there there's not a big community and we do come across a lot more racism.

S: So here more?

S2: More secure, you feel more welcomed.

S: And do you feel able to wear your Shalwar Kameez?

S2: Oh we've always worn it anyway, all the time.

S: It feels more relaxed?

S2: Um yeh but we've always worn it anyway.

S: OK. That's a more difficult question and you haven't been to the Punjab?

S2: No.

S: But do you see yourself as Punjabi rather than Indian?

S2: I think either.

S: And what's it like to be – how would you describe being a Sikh – I mean what comes to mind then?

S2: Um – very proud to be a Sikh for the reasons that – the stories that we hear about our God – our Gurus and for what they believed about their faith and how they went about keeping it.

S: Any other ones?

S2: The stories of um the seven sons that were sacrificed and um there's quite a few stories that we still don't know about that our Elders will tell us or through the Gurdwara we hear stories.

S: And um would you have more affiliation with one or more of the Gurus? Because there are quite a few of them aren't there?

S2: That's right. The main one we worship is Guru Gobind.

S: So that's the one that you turn to generally at the Gurdwara and at home?

S2: That's right.

S: Do you worship at home?

S2: I keep the tape on – I listen to the Gurbani tape every morning and that kind of gives you a sense of peace within and in your household.

S: So that's how you start the day?

S2: Yeh.

S: So that's part of being a Sikh. And what other elements of being a Sikh would you draw upon?

S2: What do you mean like...?

S: You've got the five symbols but they're quite adapted at times – like cutting your hair?

S2: That's right – a lot has changed saying that. Sikhism it's not very intense – like it's up to the individual how they take their religion. So you'll get the westernised versions of Sikhism – people who will cut their hair and wear the westernised clothes.

S: What makes them Sikh do you think?

S2: What's within and how they worship – who they worship really.

S: Do you feel quite differently from other people who are Sikhs?

S2: Um I sometimes feel a little bit westernised.

S: What does that mean?

S2: Not like – I don't know when you go to the Temple you see some people that will come regularly every Sunday and I think I should do that; I shouldn't really think I'll have a lie in today – I'll get on with ...

S: So it's how you deal with your religion and some are more fastidious?

S2: Yeh that's right.

S: And you feel you make choices. But then Sikhism does have an element of choice in it?

S2: That's right.

S: So what do you think are the most important things in a child's education?

S2: Knowing who they are, their religion – where they come from and then just general education to get a good start but I would always teach my kids where they originate from – where they come from and their own mother language – which I would try ...

S: Oh they do – it's hard isn't it?

S2: It is hard but I try and their grandma's always saying to them; like when they go there they will be taught the Punjabi and the Granthsab – and things like that.

S: So when they mix with their Elders they will be encouraged to speak Punjabi.

S2: They will – I mean we are encouraged to talk more at home but we find that difficult with our kids because they don't talk until we actually teach them – will they understand us and then we can start by exercising it at home.

S: So you haven't started that right from the beginning?

S2: No – that's right. With my eldest son he does know a lot more.

S: And also understanding words.

S2: And he does because he was brought up when I was living with my in-laws so they ground him; he had a grounding, whereas with the little one it's a lot different.

S: So what do you think are the most important things that a child must acquire to become a successful person?

S2: Um you mean generally?

S: Yeh

S2: Or in the religion- wise?

S: Well you can answer it as you feel.

S2: Generally I think a good education – a good education to get a head start. Now in ...you cannot see a lot – I don't know maybe it's the area we're living in ? But you don't see a lot of um (pause) a lot of people that are committed to their education or work –wise.

S: You mean a school education?

S2: Yeh a school education

S: You feel that they're not committed?

S2: No. Maybe that's just living in this area we can see it around us; kids on the street and obviously there is drugs and everything around this area – we don't know where but we do know it's around. So those are the things I want my kids not to be anywhere near that type of environment.

S: Do you want them to be quite focused?

S2: Yes. I want them to have a good education.

S: And what do you think that good education entails – within school for instance?

S2: What do you mean?

S: When you say education – how would you describe education?
S2: Um just the education; Maths, English...

S: The basics?

S2: The basics. I wouldn't push my kids too much I would want the basics first and then maybe they'd go on to other interests such as Music and the Arts.

S: You think they're important as well?

S2: Yeh I do.

S: And what do you think are the most important things in terms of their Sikh identity?

S2: To know where they come from because I know a lot of kids tend to forget that. They tend to become out of focus. I would like them to focus on still their identity, where they come from and their mother tongue.

S: Right that's quite a lot though isn't it?

S2: Yeh but I think saying that it won't be that hard for them because we will always tell them – because we're still part of that; and their grandparents are part of that?

S: So when you say you're part of it – you mean you act it out in many ways

S2: Yes.

S: It's not just an idea?

S2: No. We actually live it.

S: I got the impression that Sikhism was quite a sort of – you know the householder – or that 's one of the words used- it's definitely related to how you live your life?

S2: Yes. It's actually how we live our lives – if we take on having the religious festivals. If our kids see us doing that they will see that that's part of our religion and what our parents do – that's what they will see.

S: And traditionally is one of the parents rather than the other more responsible for the education of the child?

S2: No it's equally. I don't know whether that's now or how it used to be like before but now I see it as both of our responsibilities and I'm sure my husband would think that as well.

S: Well he's certainly very trusting.

S2: Yes.

S: When I said that you said it was fine to do this interviewing he was reassured. And what do you think are the most important things in terms of school education. I mean you said the basic subjects like Maths and English could you expand on it at all?

S2: Um like you said towards Arts I would like him to be interested in Arts, P.E; physical activities as well.

S: So all round?

S2: Yeh all round.

S: Are you aware of the ways in which teaching is carried out in the Gurdwara and the school?

S2: What do you mean?

S: Do the children go to the Gurdwara to be taught?

S2: No they don't; they don't actually have anything- they used to have like the Indian drum classes but they haven't actually brought out recently any lessons that I know of. But at that time anyway they were too young to go. But if they do that would be very great; I would like that.

S: I went to the larger Gurdwara the other day and there they seemed to have somebody who comes over regularly to teach and also to take the services and things.

S2: I mean in some Gurdwaras they do have that because we did actually go to learn Punjabi at a Gurdwara. One of the Grantis he used to actually stay on the premises and teach us and that was for two hours every week and I used to enjoy that.

S: Not here?

S2: Not here no; I think they are actually thinking about things for the newer generation. They are getting worried that the newer generation...

S: Doesn't quite know...

S2: Yeh.

S: Because I assumed that you need to have some knowledge as well as a feeling about being Sikh?

S2: You need the knowledge and that' s what I hope for my kids.

S: That they will gradually acquire the knowledge because you acquired them partly through going to these sessions?

S2: Mmm

S: But then you also acquired them through...

S2: Living and my parents and grandparents actually yeh because they tend to know even more.

S: Even more knowledge. So do your children mix with other Sikh children quite a bit?

S2: Um when they go to the Gurdwara – like you said they tend to play with other kids rather than worship.

S: What about with their cousins?

S2: Oh yeh, yeh – they've got brother cousins and they like to be among them.

S: Cos that must give them an affirmation of their identity?

S2: The thing is though that they're not so – they don't speak it either.

S: They don't speak Punjabi – but they just like being together?

S2: But not to know about Sikhism for the reason of cousin brothers.
S: So the family is also very important?

S2: Yeh.

S: Do you think there are issues that may confront your children that didn't confront you or your parents?

S2: I think so yeh ---- like arranged marriages and things. Like at the time when we got married; everything was like arranged marriages and nowadays you hear things about people marrying outside religion and they make you think. Because you think will our kids be growing up thinking will that's what they'll be doing. So it's a worry as well.

S: It's all these decisions. So the more traditional ...

S2: Ways are kind of slowly disappearing.

S: It feels like that?

S2: It feels like that. It is like that really – they are becoming distant.

S: And that is a concern for you?

S2: Yeh definitely...because that is a very main issue in the way of life for us.

S: But do you think there is a greater flexibility in terms of the way in which the marriages could be arranged?

S2: Oh yeh – we agree with maybe having a little more flexibility with the couples actually.

S: So are you suggesting that...?

S2: Then couples can get to know each other before they get married – yeh we agree with that. We agree with the idea that it is going to come slowly towards that and we're happy about that. What we're not happy about is kind of marriage outside the religion.

S: Well what about not within religion – well not religion in the wider sense – what about Hinduism?

S2: We haven't really thought about that.

S: It's still another religion?

S2: We haven't really thought that far ahead for our children.

S: But you see others?

S2: Yes we see others and we think gosh – is that going to work – will we see our children going through that at a later stage?

S: It's still a very unknown quantity. And the community itself would like formally arranged marriages I presume and deferring to your elders?

S2: That's right yeh.

S: But it doesn't have any answers to the diversity yet it's just aware of it?

S2: Yes.

S: Are you aware of diversity within the community?

S2: Not really.

S: How would you describe the community?

S2: Um you see they don't know anything else apart from arranged marriages. It's only if things go wrong and then it's like...

S: They'll just push it away?

S2: Just push it away.

S: So it's to keep up a certain image almost?

S2: That's right yeh.

S: But the younger generation like yourself must be more open to understanding?

S2: It is yeh but like I said outside religion is definitely a no no but then we don't know when our kids grow up we might think, no maybe it's not so bad.

S: And you discuss it – do people in the community discuss it?

S2: No!

S: (S and S2 laugh). They just say it shouldn't happen?

S2: No full stop. I mean me and my husband would discuss it. Like we'd say oh gosh we're worried about the kids when they grow up and what do we expect. We'll discuss it among ourselves and we'll discuss it among (pause) like my sister-in-law and sisters but not with the community. The community seems to be one big show of front that everybody's living in this way.

S: With members outside the community who are also Sikh but less conspicuously going to Art performances. People like Shivranjan Singh who are quite different in terms of their own understanding which is quite different.

S2: Different!

S: So they do exist but not necessarily within [this area]?

S2: Yeh.

S: So you don't see any ways in which those issues are going to be addressed as such?

S2: I really don't have a clue about what the future holds really.

S: There's quite a big lot of uncertainty?

S2: Yes there is.

S: There seems to be quite a lot of your generation who are mothers and interested in going out and studying their own um...

S2: Is it only me that worries about things like that or do you interview quite a lot of Sikh women who do worry about kids growing up and ...?

S: Well I'm not...I think there's a feeling among one or two others that – they would say that the education system could do more in terms of talking about religion so that people know a bit more and are more acquainted with the practices and beliefs.

S2: They tend to do quite a lot about that at school which I was quite surprised about because not a lot of schools do that. Because they have Dirwali day and they celebrate the festivals at the school.

S: I think it will vary according to ...

S2: It's like my cousin's son he goes to school up in ... school and they don't do nothing to do with religion and yet my son will go to his cousins and say we did Dirwali at school and they will say oh wow.

S: So you feel comfortable in that and feel that the school is quite supportive in that way?

S2: I do yeh.

S: So I think it's around things like ensuring that there's a positive image of Sikhism – not necessarily... I mean as an understanding that there's going to have to be a greater flexibility around what your children do and what you did. I think it matters very much on people 's history – what they've actually chosen to do themselves.

S2: That's right.

S: I think your feelings would represent a lot of people actually – about a fear about how to deal with these decisions. Um do you think there are issues then – not in terms of what I just said – but in terms of the relationship with the school system?

S2: With that school or with any school?

S: Well yes I think you could say with any school though you're more knowledgeable about that school.

S2: What do you mean just...

S: Well sometimes there's an issue that - well people suggest that Asian parents don't go to help at the school and that you can't rely upon them to go to parent's evenings.
I'm not suggesting that 's a good or bad thing I'm just aware that it's an issue. And I know that you do.

S2: Is it about communication is it one of those problems?

S: I think it might well be partly to do with that.

S2: Because I do see parents going up like you see Somalian parents going up, Asian parents going to the school and they're trying to pay dinner money and they're getting frustrated because they don't understand what the English receptionist is trying to say and they're fighting with them. And I think it's very sad because they're, they're kind of um – they're trying to explain themselves but they can't because they only know their own language.

S: Yes – so it's to do with language.

S2: Yeh.

S: And is it also possibly because – I don't know how you were educated but is it possibly because Asian parents can have their own agendas in terms of priorities apart from the school 's?

S2: I think that's what it is – yeh.

S: It seems that they might have to introduce children to a set of values that are not included in the educational system; in terms of ways of life or practices sometimes or customs. And also the extended family also with the extended family – I don't know how it is with your family – do you still feel the extended family is very much a theme?

S2: What do you mean?

S: As part of the Asian identity by comparison to western ways?

S2: Definitely.

S: In terms of loyalty – and almost a hierarchy – is that right? Because I get the feeling that there are special places that are special places which are clearly defined whether it is in the Gurdwara or even in the home, like shrines and in the Mosque...

S2: That's right actually because my mother- in- law has a little room in which she keeps the Guru Granthsab which is a place of worship and like she'll try and teach our kids that as soon as they come in they must go and bow to that. So they know it's in the house and acknowledge that that 's the space.

S: That can be more important or equally important or perhaps sometimes more important than school – is that possible?

S2: I think it's possible.

S: So in an ideal world you would want somebody who would acquire reasonable qualifications to get a reasonable job but also...

S2: Because living in England we have to do that as well. We have to get an education to be living in England and to get ahead more. Where – we're living two lives we're living an Asian life and an English life.

S: Yes I think that's very important.

S2: So that's why you have to have a bit of both.

S: And I was trying to work through my research with the idea of 'constructs of success' and over the last year the word 'success' has started to irritate me rather. Because it seems a very western concept- success- is there a word that is equivalent that you could use more in an eastern – with a more eastern meaning attached to it?

S2: I'm not very good with words – I can't think of anything.

S: It's used very much in documentation – in things like the National Curriculum and in policies and things like that and it's bandied around. And I'm wondering that it doesn't reflect the meanings that are incorporated in a more Indian world or eastern world? So it doesn't matter. But moving on; in what ways – you've mentioned the challenges it faces but in what ways do you think the community might be changing – do you think there is a change?

S2: In the newer generation there is a change with us and our children growing up it will be a lot different from how our grandparents grew up.

S: And what do you think is going to sustain – what do you think is going to be the strongest thing that's going to sustain it?

S2: Um the thing is I don't know really – I really don't because we don't know how things are going to move on.

S: What is it that attracts you to being a Sikh? What did you say originally – you said something –but what makes Sikhism so valuable.

S2: Cos we've been brought up with it from day one and we've always had it with us.

S: And what messages come to mind that are the most enduring or enlightening?

S2: I think stories of our Gurus and stories about our religion, stories about our Gurus and how they fought to keep Sikhism. That they were sacrificed – just stories that when you hear them – you feel more so - how to be a Sikh.

S: But what is it they were fighting for?

S2: They were fighting for the religion. Because the Muslims wanted them to become Muslims so then the God's sons were sacrificed; one was buried alive, one was put on a ...(interruption- switch off the tape).

(discussion while the tape was off)

S: So what were you saying – what were you saying about these question?

S2: I'm finding them difficult to answer because I don't believe that I have enough knowledge in myself to kind of answer your questions for you – because they are quite difficult and deep.

S: Yes they are. We were talking about what the Gurus were fighting for to sustain Sikhism and the thing that occurred to me also when we talked about how society's changing is that issues are changing as well. But when I went to the Vaisaki session of women last year, I was a bit concerned or interested because women were putting forward some of the ideas to do with the sacrificing and things that you've mentioned. But some of the younger women – I mean they weren't women yet. They were like teenagers seemed very genuine in terms of being Sikh as well but they were challenging it and they were asking these questions like they were not equal and that in their lives they did not feel as if they were treated equally. They were just saying challenging things – but I was just wondering – the response was quite negative towards them; was like you shouldn't be asking them. Do you think that in general in [this area]or do you think it might be other...

S2: I think it's going to be an issue everywhere. Because the younger generation will want answers.

S: Because I sometimes think that the education system asks people to ask questions – that's seen as part of development. Well that's the impression I get – and so children are going to come back and ask questions at home? Although as you said you do have those stories.

S2: Yes and yet I don't know about it but there's a lot more depth to it.

(interruption).

S: In what ways do you think visits to the Punjab affects children? What do you think parents hope their children will gain from visits to the Punjab?

S2: To see what their religion is about – to actually visit God and to see what Sikhism is all about, and visit all the Gurdwaras. And in some of them they actually have things with Guru Gobind – the swords and things like that and I'd want the kids to see that.

S: And to feel proud?

S2: And to feel proud that this is very beautiful and important.

S: That's fine – is there anything that you would like to draw my attention to? Things that I haven't brought up as an issue in terms of education and in terms of Sikh identity?

S2: Not really – I'm quite happy with the education – the only thing that worries me is the outside Sikh education and it would be great if they could have that at the school but it's not always...

S: I also got the impression that some of the children didn't get the chance to find out about Sikhism because the Gurdwaras are so far away?

S2: That does happen with some families yeh.

S: Do you use the Sikh resource centre yourself?

S2: I don't know . Because I don't really feel that I need it – I don't want to sound too big headed but it's there to help – I mean from what I know it's there to help language barriers and to help with filling out forms – any sort of help really. But we can get on with day to day things.

S: So you just discuss issues within your family – there's no communal gathering?

S2: No.

S: Apart from in the Gurdwaras which are around ...?

S2: Yeh ... is the one we go to.

S: OK that's great is there anything else you'd like...

S2: No.

(S and S2 laugh) THE END

S3: Sikh radical:
(who was originally FS3 see appendix two) and S: researcher.

S: First I wanted to ask you what it's like to be a South Asian?

S3: First thing I would like to say is that I am an Indian and also that as far as my religion is concerned I am a Sikh.

S: That's what I was going to ask you about next. What would you consider to be important to you as a Sikh? That's the most important part of your identity being a Sikh?

S3: No there's a lot of identities about being an Indian. The fact that my skin is brown and the fact that I've been born in Britain and then there's the culture and then there's my relationship with Britain because I am a Black person in Britain so there's lots of relationships to India. And part of being a Sikh is that it is just one of many religions in India.

S: So what part of it does mean something to you?

S3: Um I like - Sikhism means something to me because I grew up with this idea that everyone is equal but I believe that there is one religion.

S: What d' you mean there's no such thing as different religions?

S3: There's no difference in the religions of the world

S; Equality.

S3: Yeh it's a secular religion. What I like about Sikhism is that as a child I grew up in a Sikh family... and we were new in the fifties so we all set up the temple so we used to go all the time and everyone got married there.. So it was a part of my life when I grew up... So I grew up really in the temple. I was told all these things but I didn't really understand but as I grew up I learnt a bit more about life. And I have a funny relationship with Sikhism because I have the relationship with it as a child and I have another relationship with it as an adult. I do find what it says and what it does as two different things.

S: You like the ideas and the philosophy and are not so impressed by the practices and customs.

S3: No.

S: So if we move on from there to that issue about children – what do you think are the most important things in a child's education then – in your child's education?

S3: For my children – I don't know I mean as far as religion is concerned we never say there isn't a God but then we don't say God is anything in particular so we do let her be. And I don't want her brought up as I was.

S: I mean I just wondered what issues – that you're aware of – might arise for your children but that didn't arise for you or your mother because of the different context? A different sort of upbringing.

S3: Like we were brought up to be like our parents in the villages and like the extended family over there. Except over there they wanted them to get married at twelve and we were able to get married at sixteen. So I don't really see that they're going to have an arranged marriage ...

S: So they won't have those pressures?

S3: No.

S: So she won' have the kind of pressures that would occur if you were being more strict. Do you think she'll feel Sikh?

S3: I don't know if our children will be Sikh I think they'll make up their own mind. But because she goes to ...school she wants to wear Shalwar and I've always cut her hair and now she wants to grow it long.

S: So she likes that Idea to do with her identity?

S3: Mmm.

S: But what about when I was asking you about the education of the child you told me about your education and how you were educated into your Sikh culture. What other things would you consider?

S3: About the education of my children – what I would do rather than the school d'you mean?

S: I mean the next questions around like what do children need to acquire to be successful people? You know what are your priorities?

S3: Um my priorities - well I found my upbringing really oppressive - are that they should learn social skills and that they should learn to start living with each other in like a civilised way and that they should have an academic education and also that their creativity should be nurtured and their spirituality and not in an orthodox way.

S: So what impression do you have about this community?

S3: What in ...

S: Yes.

S3: Well I have the impression that they are like the community I grew up in I know that 's quite a limited view because I don't know them but I suppose the contact I do have means that I recognise the community and I was quite shocked when I saw this. In places people are more worldly but here they're just living with the old village traditions especially about women.

S: Do you see any of that changing at all?

S3: Yes my feeling is that it's going to have to change. I think it's probably the women that are changing inside themselves and that it's the girls who are making those changes; it's just important that they don't hide it.

S: Otherwise they'll leave the area?

S3: ...

S: So the sort of changes that might have happened in Birmingham how do you think they came about? Or do you think ...'s going to be different?

S3: Well I think it's got a larger population. And so they're not so nosey about each other.

S: Because it's a bit like village because it's so small here?

S3: Mmm and people are more timid here about anything different.

S: But you are quite happy to live here?

S3: No I'd rather not live here – I'd rather go and live in the country like in Dorset or Cornwall that's what I want to do but I can't just go and live any where when there's racial prejudice and I've got two Asian girls to bring up. That's why I live here that 's why I'll always live in the inner city in a multi-cultural area.

S: Yes that's similar to me although my children don't look particularly Asian because [my husband] was White. But when I was living in Torrington in North Devon I remember once [my son] and I were going for a walk on castle hill there and we saw a West Indian and [my son] said ' look mummy there's another Black person like you mummy'. And I decided that I really wanted him to see Black people as ordinary and not as specimens. I wanted him to mix with different people and to be familiar with those differences. So I can agree with you about that sense of identity. And I wanted my children to see them as real people rather than images of people.

S3: And I think that's interesting because that's a new form of identity. That's never been anybody's idea of identity but it is an identity just to say that your identity relates to your skin colour. And I find that exciting because I met a native American from America at the weekend and it was so exciting that we had so much to say to each other. There was just so much excitement about meeting just based on the brown skin. So I'm really interested in this whole notion.

S: So you like quite an extensive understanding. Because on one level you like aspects of Sikhism or Indian philosophy, which appeal to you in terms of its spiritual/ cultural depth – at least that's how I understood what you described before [in a previous interview]. And there is this other aspect of identity, which is to do with appearance really in terms of your colour, which um obviously creates some catalyst for some people. And obviously that's something that your children are confronting to some extent in terms of how they identify with other people in the school grounds? Even if you don't give them a Sikh or um Asian upbringing they're are going to be interested in children who look like them? But what do you think are the most important things in terms of the school education?

S3: Well I don't really have any expectations actually. I do like a comprehensive education in ... I mean I wouldn't want to see any racism and that they are not being taught well but I see there are so many non White children in the school that may not be an issue. Because I used to get told that I wasn't any good when I was.

S: Oh right so there was a sort of prejudice?

S3: Yes prejudice. I wouldn't - I want my children to have an all round education and no prejudice. I'd also like them to learn and they do - about different cultures and religions. And she knows about all that because she learnt about that earlier in the year they were taught about the Caribbean and about Islam.

S: So that's partly what you've done – is to bring them into an environment where they'll have opportunities to have multicultural education through the school? But in your home life – you don't go to the Gurdwara or do you?

S3: Yes we do sometimes.

S: You do; and then you wear Shalwar Kameez.

S3: Mmm.

S: And then she does wear one?

S3: Mmm.

S: And does she go and sit in the ...?

S3: Mmm she does all that and she does that anyway because if we go to Glasgow then she'd go but then twice or three times we went to Gurdwaras here in the [...] area. But since I've had the baby I've not had time and I've stopped going to them. But yes it is something we do.

S: Do you ever speak Punjabi?

S3: Yes she has a story book and I teach her; I've been trying to get my husband to teach her some Hindi but that's not working so well. Yes but I do like teaching her for some sessions.

S: Oh so you do have that at home.

S3: Oh yes because I'm not a ...I do.

S: That's their cultural heritage – that's what you're saying to them?

S3: Mmm and sometimes we read stories or make them up and give them an idea of the vocabulary as well.

S: So that's quite creative as well?

S3: Mmm.

S: But would you take them to the Punjab or to India as well?

S3: Yes.

S: And what would you want them to gain from that experience?

S3: Well Y went there at two and a half for seven months and now we'd like to go back there as soon as we can. And my husband's from Orissa so we usually go to Orissa. I haven't been back to the Punjab with my husband because of all that trouble in the Punjab but I'd love to go back and see the house and place.

S: So you'd like them to see their roots and house?

S3: Mmm.

S: And what other things would you hope that they would gain?

S3: I'd like them to see their relatives and the Punjab and I'd probably take them to a Gurdwara and one or two temples.

S: And in Orissa in India.

S3: And in Orissa – it's the same – I mean you go back to the temple and you're always in the temple – because it's part of the life there.

S: Yeh – so they'll see it as part of everyday life – all these religious customs?

S3: Mmm Mmm

S: And just being surrounded by it, all that culture that's quite different. Do you think that contrast being here and being out in India is important for children?

S3: I don't know I think ---I know people who went in their childhood it really, it really transformed then and it has Y. And people who never went did feel the gap.

S: Yes the children have expressed that to me – those who haven't been are dying to go there. So aware though that- I know this doesn't confront your particular children because there aren't very strict ritualised functions at the Gurdwara – but are aware of any difference in ways of teaching that go on in the community – in terms of that religious upbringing and the school education? I suppose you feel more of an outsider to it?

S3: Yeh that's not something I really get involved in.

S: Yes that's alright – that's fine – it's much more of an issue for those who are involved and in that sense I suppose you do stand out as being quite different. And do you think that Asian parents confront certain things with the school because there is an issue around Asian parents not being involved with the school system? What's your insight?

S3: My opinion of Asians is that they see school as there to give an academic education; they come from countries where education isn't free and they see education as a tool and they're just really glad that their children over here and getting a good education. And they're told that British education is the best and they think it's a golden opportunity. And I think that most of the parents feel that the school is a way above them it's a bit like the Sahib in colonial times.

S: So it's a hierarchical position they put themselves in?

S3: Oh in their minds they still three quarters urbanising and so as far as they're concerned they've got nothing to offer the school. And that the school doesn't want to know what they've got to say any way. They just feel that their children are getting the best education in the world. Even if it's just an inner city, run of the mill school. I don't think the parents see it like I do. I see it as just an inner city school so it won't be that great so I have a lot more criticism; so I tend to get more involved as a critical person.

S: To ensure that ...

S3: To ensure standards are met whereas I don't think Asian parents do.

S: They just accept it – in the same way that they accept the order or hierarchy within their own family set up?

S3: What hierarchy?

S: Well that certain people in certain positions do certain things and that you don't question – well my understanding is that they have certain customs and behaviour which allow certain actions depending upon whether they're female, male, children, mothers or Elders or whatever?

S3: Oh yes they live as people do over in India; they live in extended families where the elders have more power; the older brother has or the older sister has. Everybody has a distribution of power that is based on a pyramid.

S: And it's actually ordered – you don't question it?

S3: The ...?

S: And in that sense the educational system is also seen as another hierarchical system where they don't feel they're in a position to intervene?

S3: Mmmm.

S: Yes that's how I've had to look at it as well. And it's interesting to look at it from that way round rather than from that of language because language comes up but you don't...

S3: No it's not language ---it's this notion of colonisation because most middle-class Asians speak English as a second language so if they were in schools they could speak English to the teachers. So it's not about language because there's Punjabi speaking teachers in the school. I mean it's about interest – they're not interested. They see the secular world as a material world and they're just there to get as much as they can out of it. So they're really glad that the kids are going to school. And it's secular – if it was religious – if it started to interfere with the religious side of it – then they'd all be there and language wouldn't stop them.

S: That's interesting – no that's a really important insight. (short break) . I was thinking of asking you about Birmingham but I think I'll ask you straight – what sort of things in the next ten years this community might have to confront? (pause). I mean it seem to be that some individuals that I've talked to say that it's cheaper to fly to India these days and therefore there's a much stronger

link with the families out there. People are able to visit their cultural heritage and find a much stronger sense of identity. So that very precise identity – not your sort – but one that circulates around a religious base possibly is more strong. And children therefore have a stronger sense of identity because of these visits and because of their rituals and they are more Gurdwaras and Mosques -. So it's not becoming more integrated or involved with western values. There's quite a separation; I mean I just wondered what issues are arising in that some individual children might want to keep up with ...

S3: I mean to me these things are happening in India too.

S: Yes.

S3: And I think the culture is evolving anyway. I mean I think the other part of westernization is that the colonisation is finished. I think it's becoming glaringly obvious to people who come from world- wide origin that even if their culture has been disparaged that it's not true. And I that all the cultures that colonialism touched – which is basically all the world – is that the younger generation are beginning to pick and chose and discriminate between what they want to keep and what they don't. And they realise that with music and the media they're not losing their culture their just transforming it and adapting it. And I feel the strength of my own family and my Indian culture because everyone's changed; I mean I've seen changes that I would have never dreamt would have happened. I mean I imagined that people would marry English people and get divorced and who eat roast beef and potatoes on Sunday but it's not happened and I believe that all the older generation – I mean I've got relatives in their fifties and they were forced to have arranged marriages but they're much more generous and open with their children. And in ten years time their children are going to be ten, fifteen years old and they'll be more tolerant and understanding. I mean it's already happening – my nephews are allowed to do things I wasn't allowed to.

S: So there's not a fear of losing identity?

S3: No because you want to keep that love and that closeness and kindness for each other. Because I think there was a lot more understanding about English families and people used to look up to but now we're finding that they don't look after their parents and brothers and sisters don't love each other. And parents just because they have love marriages; it doesn't mean they love each other more than arranged marriages love each other. So we've got a new understanding of ourselves about our identity that we are going to survive.

S: And it's certainly not rejection of – or having to choose between one or the other even?

S3: No and now Sikhs – I mean lots of feminist women I know who left home at seventeen or had to lie and who were called sluts and things like that ; I mean now a lot of them want to go to the Gurdwara and pray and we're saying it's our temple – it's ours, and it believes in equality as well and we are not going to tolerate you shitty patriarchs. You know I think there's going to be a real shift in who actually is going to take ownership of the culture.

S: Right.

S3: Yeh I do. And people are doing it in India and people are sending the old crotchety mother-in-laws – who say stay at home and do the cooking they're sending them to psychiatrists. (S & S3 laugh). So there's a whole reversal in the culture whereas the younger lot are claiming ownership of it and it's going to lose bits. I mean there's a lot of rubbish in the culture.

S: So it has to be shoved out?

S3: Yes it's all got to be thrown away.

S: But what aspect of the culture are going to attract – you've got this possibility of two if not more cultures – what sort of things might attract the younger generation do you think?

S3: With the western culture - there's this fusion and stuff – western culture – I think there's going to be no such thing as the western culture – everything's just – I mean its all called confusion and fusion. I think it's just going to go on blending, ending and evolving. But the thing is the more you do that; the more people go back to their own culture because that's what was there. And they keep going back there and bringing back more. They keep digging more out. There's this kind of treasure chest of knowledge, craft and art and religion and spirituality and it's pouring into eastern music nowadays. The way you've got sort of quallis and Hindu chants - so they're mixing all the religions and I think there's a lot of hope there because there was a time when they were strict with all the younger generations and saying I'm Muslim, I'm Sikh; I'm this and they're not doing that in the music and the culture. And there's all this older generation thing; like people who grew up in the sixties and seventies and they're all very progressive with the younger generation. And now their children are in their fifties and thirties.

S: So whatever ... community does in terms that it's more – it's slower progress there will still be this outside culture within England; within the UK which is more expansive that they can also connect with?

S3: Yeh and it's more open because like in my mum's time – I don't know.

S: Would you live in India then?

S3: Yeh I would live in India because India to me is a lot more open than here. You know..yeh I would definitely.

S: So it's to do with money then?

S3: Yeh and work.

S: You wouldn't get the same income?

S3: I'd find it difficult to get a job. But ultimately it would be easier. We're definitely thinking of going.

S: Right OK. I just wondered if you feel there is anything else that I should be aware of in terms of the issues around the community, the education system and the school?

S3: I mean I don't – I mean my feeling at the school is that I don't like the people that I've noticed that are Born Again Christians that say Jesus is alive and

then the next day say it's the tenth commandments and Allah, So I find it all a bit oppressive whether it's English or whether it's fundamentalist Muslims. So I think the challenge for the community is not to get lost up it's own bum in terms of being reactionary. And I think it's very important for women. I believe it's women all over the world that need to gain more power because just recently one of the religious Mullahs who's twenty nine who has just be done for sexually abusing two of his pupils – two girls and that's in ...and I just think that women are losing out and taking too much of that patriarchal rubbish.

S: That's power.

S3: It's either that or to challenge it really.

S: It's quite a big challenge.

S3: Yes but I don't think people in Britain should get lost and think ooh that's the culture we'd better leave that alone, that's how people think and that 's how they live.

S: But I do think that they need to have a bit more understanding about why Asian parents are not involved in the education system you know if it's going to be an issue. And also I think they need to be understanding of all the education that does go on even if they don't agree with it or you don't agree with it. That there is this whole agenda that Asian parents are focused on in terms of giving a sense of identity...

S3: It's because they're not educated themselves.

S: But also it's about giving them a sense of identity as well. Some of the things link into things that you're saying but they're tighter; they're more rigid. But still that business of having an identity that is related to your physical appearance and also your cultural heritage that is quite defined – it's not nebulous.

S3: I don't know. It's wrong to look at them as if they're these people that have this incurable disease, which is a bit like what it's like. It's not like that ; they're not a problem. A lot of White people don't get involved with their children's education.

S: No that's fine unless there's anything else you want to say?

S3: No.

THE END

APPENDIX SIX: INTERVIEWS IN BANGLADESH AND THE PUNJAB

Interviews with various academics and teachers as listed below

(All these participants consented to be quoted in my research. However the researcher was not able to get responses from the summaries of the interviews sent out to them from the UK so their names are not included, only their university or school and position they held (The name "Singh" is given to all male Sikhs).

In Bangladesh:
Professor at Dhaka University, Researcher worker in Dhaka and Interviews with teachers two in Dhaka and three in Sylhet.

In the Punjab
Professor at Chandigar University, Professor Singh at Amritsar University, Dr Singh in Chandigar and Interviews with two teachers and an administrator in Amritsar.

INTERVIEWS IN BANGLADESH

INTERVIEW WITH A PROFESSOR AT DHAKA UNIVERSITY

The Professor explained the contents of the syllabus at primary school, government involvement in education and the difficulties of planning and implementing certain ideals as detailed below.

The government is very involved in primary school education. Primary school education is compulsory and the government supplies textbooks, pays salaries to the teachers, revises the textbooks, enforces the exam system and decides on pedagogic practices. It also inspects the schools to ensure that certain practices are maintained. However, there are many problems that still exist.

First, poverty prevents certain groups of people from committing their children to schools. NGOs aim to assist this process.

Second, although education is greatly valued in the culture there is still a very high dropout level and an insufficient numbers of girls attending. The government has tried to change this by awarding scholarships for later education (secondary and tertiary) to those females who are not married but the Professor argues that societal beliefs and practices lag behind in terms of attitudes to female education and aspirations.

Third, there is a problem with teacher practices and the exam system. Exams occur half yearly and sessionally in tests. The exams involve multiple choice questions but the answers can be memorised. Furthermore, parents and children fear exams because you have to get over fifty percent to pass and the children are not prepared for what is required. This relates to the limited pedagogic practices that exist. In general children are taught by rote and although corporal punishment is illegal many bad practices still occur. Teachers in general can be unfriendly and inaccessible to their pupils. The Professor believes that although children are well behaved their lack of respect for their teachers because of their teacher's authoritarian attitudes can bring out a negative attitude towards schooling. She believes that parents are often more friendly and caring towards their children and that teachers should also become more friendly towards their pupils. Children are punished for answering back and not encouraged to ask questions. Children's creative potential is not encouraged. There is group work and also English teaching but in these respects the government

schools are well behind the private and English medium schools. However, learning English does entail learning a little about the English culture as well.

Fourth, parents are limited in a way that it is difficult for the West to comprehend. Parents often fear sending children to school, because they can't afford to buy the clothes to cover their children so that they can go to school and mix with others. The parents do not have anything to do with schools in general and pay for their children to have tuition to help them with homework or problems.

Fifth, there is a serious problem enforcing any programmes because the government is corrupt and though it designs decent programmes it doesn't develop administrative systems so that the monitoring and implementation of these policies is seriously inadequate. At the moment the many Hartals or strikes disrupt any programmes of study including exam time, furthermore, students in university are becoming too violent and the pawns for corrupt politicians and giving themselves and as a consequence the educational system a bad name. The Professor used the analogy of the chaos in the traffic on the streets to describe the state of the country. There is no organisation to rely upon, people go slow and fast, converge at all points on a round about and do not respect or understand any system that might exist.

However, there are other aspects of primary school education that are just specific to the educational requirements of Bangladesh culture. First Islam is incorporated into the curriculum. Although, the family teaches their children to learn the Koranic verses, the school teaches the meanings, rules and customs of the religion. Bangladesh is proud of its cultural heritage and the curriculum teaches about the country's specific culture and environment within a few of the subjects; environmental science, social science, Bangla and also in religious education as so many of the country's social practices are Islamic. There is also a bad feeling about being confused with India, India is seen as a separate country altogether. In general UK culture is known about through the BBC and relatives; certain things such as codes of dressing are not appreciated. The Professor is interested in the insights and models that western educational psychologists generate to tackle lack of motivation and comprehension.

INTERVIEW WITH AN ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH WORKER (at an NGO base in Dhaka)

This research worker is well qualified to discuss the beliefs and values of his country. He has a first class degree in economics, a Master's and has completed two research projects, one for Bangladesh Ministry of Agriculture. While he was a student at Dhaka University he represented his Hall as a debater at national level. He has also assisted the development of aid organisations and worked as a protocol assistant for the ministry of foreign affairs. He is now only in his late twenties. He was happy to discuss the situation his country faces as we embark on the twenty first century. He believes that it is vital to make people aware of different perspectives, to have access to knowledge and to be able to make informed decisions as well as to remain flexible in decision-making. He feels that among the many problems that his country faces, higher literacy levels are crucial.

The research worker considers that though his country is known to have literacy rate of over 50% the quality of understanding is insufficient. He wants to define literacy as more than just writing your name and being able to count. He understands that his country has faced a long history of exploitation and simultaneously has a very poor educational status that affects many other areas of concern. He believes that people's awareness is raised through education and that it is a necessary resource

or capital for any country. He considers that the educational system is inconsistent; that it is always changing its styles and practices. Sometimes it appears to adopt a UK approach and then it changes it again. This incoherence makes it difficult to reach any targets. His experience as a debater made him aware of the potential of flexibility in decision making and establishing a perspective. He recognises that the poor and semi employed such as rickshaw drivers have never the opportunity to understand any more then their own limited experience or opinion. His own self development has been greatly enhanced by access to various resources and people. He believes there is still a great deal to do at the grass roots level of Bangladesh society.

The research worker understands that hostility towards India developed after India gained independence and that the communal conflict has still not been resolved. He believes that education would alleviate this problem because it is important to understand different perspectives as mentioned above. He suggests that a lack of education allows ignorant and ill-informed politicians to take power. He considers that if people are not educated then they cannot hope to have educated leaders.

He is proud and aware that his people are known to be good-natured, hospitable, generous and eager to learn. He has circulated with foreigners who have mentioned this to him. He considers that the humanism in his country is not based so much on the religion but rather it originated in the great Aryan Indian culture that developed many centuries ago. By contrast he sees the west as more aggressive and impatient. He is interested in western popular songs and likes their rhythm but feels that they express a very transitory view of life and do not offer a more sustaining understanding of life. None the less he feels that cross fertilisation of cultures has the capacity to be both constructive and destructive. He sees globalisation as the greatest challenge his culture faces. At my request he identified some famous poems and poets whose work I have already recorded in the background to Bangladesh.

DHAKA PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER

This teacher has taught for many years. He is due to retire in five years- he is only able to teach until the age of fifty seven and then government legislation dictates that he must resign. He loves teaching, he says that he is married to teaching,. He had the opportunity to become a lawyer but has committed himself to teaching. He teaches in a very challenging situation. The inner city school he teaches in is very poor. When he retires he intends to continue giving lessons. At present he gives extra classes to children who are struggling and often doesn't charge anything to the parents because he knows they are too poor. He has achieved a remarkably high standard of achievement for his students despite their circumstances. He manages to get a government scholarship for one child in the school. The government only gives out one scholarship to one girl and one boy for every 300 students who sit the exam. He is competing with many other schools including two private schools. Last year one girl and one boy from his school both managed to get a scholarship. So how does he manage to enjoy teaching so much, in such difficult circumstances and what does he believe are the answers?

First he explained details about the system that the Professor at Dhaka had already outlined. Basically every year children have to sit exams and if they don't pass them they have to resit. They only stay for a short time in the lower class until they are ready to resit. In fact most of the classes have the same age group in them. In the last year of the primary school they take the five subjects already outline by the Professor at Dhaka university. In English (his subject) this entails being able to write

a letter to a pen friend about their home and school. However, it is not a letter where they express their particular thoughts and feelings but rather one that they have learnt. They can also translate from text.s. They do have creative lessons that involve art and craft but this is an unusual feature for a government school. They don't do homework because he understands that their home circumstances make it impossible to find the place and time. Most of the children's houses are extremely crowded. He would like to be able to give them homework. The school building itself takes two shifts of schools. In the morning another school uses the building from 6am to 12 noon. Then his school starts from 12.30 pm to 5.30 pm. A typical (small sized) classroom holds about forty children. In one class-room there are often three classes. In fact in his school only four teachers are responsible for 500 students. Four lakhs (one lakh is equal to 1000) of people live in his school's Tana(area). So how do they manage to work under these circumstances?

One noticeable difference between the children in his school and the ones in my local area is that they are extremely well behaved, work very hard in class and are enthusiastic about speaking English even though they seldom have the chance. It is unusual for English to be taught in State schools but the teacher considers it indispensable because it is an international language. He would like to make his children 'suitable citizens for their country and fit for society... honest, industrious, to serve the nation, have a positive attitude to other people and co-operate with other people. Another main concern is to help them go on to high school. However, their moral development is also essential and he repeated that he would like them to be honest, have a good character and not cheat. He believes that their Islamic education helps this moral development.

I asked the teacher how he managed to achieve such success as a teacher and he said that apart from the great abilities of his students it was because he works diligently with the syllabus that he is given. However, the fact that the government's power to dictate not only what but, how teaching should be practised is a serious problem for him. He feels that children have very different abilities and ways in which they can learn and that the system the government enforces doesn't take any individual needs into consideration. He tries to give individual attention but it is difficult under the circumstances. He would also like to use Froebel's ideas about how to teach a foreign language, he would like to use the word and letter system so that children can learn the many meanings or potential meanings of a letter or a word. He understands that the NGOs and private schools have a greater licence to teach in a more creative and varied way. He sees himself as a facilitator and not as a dictator.

In brief the teacher realises that he cannot expect parental involvement because parents are too busy and ill equipped to help with homework because they have not the facilities, knowledge or time. His successes, despite crippling circumstances, are not due to government restrictions (lack of pedagogic practices allowed, lack of facilities and amenities) but rather because of the enthusiasm he has for teaching and his belief in his children's need to be educated and their ability to learn and work hard.

INTERVIEW WITH AN EDUCATIONALIST WHO HAS SUCCESSFULLY SET UP TWO PRIVATE, ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS IN DHAKA

This educationalist set up the centre for business studies in 1993, it deals with post primary school age. However, he realised that children would be better equipped if his type of education started earlier on. In 1997 he set up the Salvation school that starts at playgroup age and continues until 'O'level(equivalent of our G.C.S.E.). In

Dhaka there is a growing awareness that English is important for vocational purposes. There is increasing international trade in Bangladesh, and also a general expectation that if you can afford it, private schools offer better education. This man's philosophy is that it is important to introduce an international, secular educational system that encourages coexistence between different cultures. He started by giving private tuition and gained so much work that he had to set up schools to meet the demand. He now has students from Nepal and Sri Lanka as well as Bangladesh. He provided some useful insights about how to teach English in an English medium school and also the difference between western and Bangladeshi societies. He believes that it is important to incorporate the best of both worlds within his educational system. He believes in what he calls the 'one world' concept.

The educationalist likes to adapt any pedagogic practice to suit the needs of his students. He quickly discovered that children who didn't know English fell behind in other subjects if they were taught them only in English because they didn't understand the concepts, so in his school certain subjects are taught in Bengali. He also found that children learn best if they applied their knowledge. He uses the University of London syllabus, which includes the grammar and structure of language but also creative interaction. He doesn't believe in cramming or rote learning and believes in encouraging children to become independent thinkers.

However he faces logistical and societal problems. In the first place he had to stop buying textbooks form the UK because he wasn't buying in bulk sufficiently to make it cost effective. English textbooks are very expensive to order and buy in Bangladesh. He then started to buy from places like Hong Kong. He also sees the Bangladeshi culture as predominately conformist and conservative. He wants to encourage independent mindedness and initiative but finds that in practice the culture of his country is intolerant of globalisation and only plays lip service to different ideas that it ultimately cannot accept. He believes that Bangladeshi culture is basically too traditional, that there is a lack of education, questioning and democratic thinking. He sees that employers are impressed by official government qualifications and therefore his students have to take the general exams although he has also developed his own assessment system. He believes that the western cultures are more able and willing to make changes and accommodate differences. However, he understands that although this is a positive aspect of the west that, the west suffers from a break down in family life that he sees as a threat. He believes that it is important to have a clear national identity as well as an international understanding.

This educationalist believes that the government sees his type of institution as a threat because it fears it threatens the national culture and will not contribute any funding for this reason. However, he feels that although his pedagogic practices can at times seem similar to those of the NGOs, his schools are fundamentally different because he is training his students to be very successful and to compete on the world market. By contrast the NGO schools are just teaching the basics to very poor people. He also believes that the Open University in Bangladesh has still to prove that it will help people get jobs and that it still has a long way to go to prove this. Paradoxically he believes in using the market to provide dividends for the wealthy and is therefore a proponent of private schools and yet he often quotes Marx. He identifies with the importance of international thinking and also with dialectical changes that occur through the process of debate and argument. He believes that there is a positive tension between a need for a strong national identity and an awareness of other international strengths. In a sense he believes in promoting democratic thinking but is happy to work within a undemocratic system. Perhaps it is even beyond the enterprises of this educationalist to envisage influencing any fundamental egalitarian beliefs into his country?

INTERVIEW WITH SCHOOL TEACHER IN STATE PRIMARY SCHOOL
in a rural town

I interviewed the head teacher in this school, she had also spent six months in a school in Tower Hamlets in London on an exchange. She told me that the main difference between the two educational systems was that in Sylhet they have hardly any facilities or teaching materials and that the class sizes are at least double. (As with all the government schools I visited they work on a two shift system; in the morning the younger children use the school grounds and in the afternoon the older children). Later she agreed that the children in Sylhet were much more obedient and had more respect for their teachers.

Most of the small classrooms hold up to sixty or eighty children. However, the government promises to increase the school accommodation next year. The government provides the text books and these are the essential equipment for learning. She mentioned that by the end of the Primary school a teacher would assume that the children would have completed their fixed lessons, textbooks and that they would therefore be prepared for high school. The problem of motivation exists because there are such high rates of unemployment and lack of jobs. She felt that education has the potential to change children's lives; it can make them literate and also more aware of the codes of practice in the society even a rickshaw driver would be more aware of the rules and regulations on the road if he was educated.

Parents are often unable to help their children and more recently children have become more educated than their parents. The government has more pressure on literacy and the inspectors are more evident. This has increased performance. She said that 80% of primary schools are government schools and that private schools are just for a few children. None the less parents will pay for children to have extra tuition if they can afford it and wouldn't expect to help their children with homework. She realised that private schools have the option to use its own curriculum more, to use different pedagogic practices and is better equipped.

She said that teaching is hard work, full of responsibility and that she would be grateful if they had fewer children in a classroom. She did not feel critical of the content of education or the exam system. She felt that English lessons are a good idea and that children learnt a little about English culture through the dialogue and occasions that are given in the text books such as what breakfast is like in England.

(I felt that she was not conversant with questions about what she felt about teaching nor with criticising the system. I then had the opportunity to interview the English teacher at the high school, which was in the same grounds. He seemed to be more aware of the weaknesses of the system).

INTERVIEW WITH THE ENGLISH TEACHER AT THE HIGH SCHOOL
In a rural town

The teacher explained how children coming from the other rural schools nearby often had problems when they reached the high school because their education had been so lacking. They were often unable to pass the tests to get in. He said that it was difficult to arrange group work because the classes are so crowded. And that the government is increasing the numbers by ten percent next year yet not increasing the amount of staff. However, he was very enthusiastic about the interactive method of teaching and he encouraged children to ask questions, he realised this was unusual. He was lucky to have had some training in the communicative method of teaching

languages. He was also fortunate to have had training with a few teachers from Birmingham who came over for thirty hours in 1997.

He said that there were serious problems for mothers to get involved with the schools; that they are often inhibited by their fathers and their daughters and tended to keep strictly to an Islamic way of life that kept them in the home. He was also aware that there was a problem in memorising material for tests and not actually applying it. He also felt that English teaching should ideally be done by native speakers and was also aware that the visual aids that would assist teaching English were well beyond the school's budget *(Sylhet is relatively prosperous compared to other areas of Bangladesh).*

INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS IN A VILLAGE SCHOOL

These teachers had to confront two serious problems, one was an old problem and related to trying to persuade the rural population that education is a good thing and the other is a recent problem. In the past this school has had a good reputation and even managed to get some children as far as Sylhet High school and then into Sylhet University. However, recently a new privately run Islamic school has been set up(with financial assistance from a firm in Japan) just down the road and it has attracted all the parents who feel ambitious about their children's education. Now the school has a dwindling number of children and suffers from decreasing morale.

To address the problem with parents teachers were allowed to make home visits to parents. But it is still difficult to mobilise parents because they often live below the poverty line and are illiterate. Nonetheless they have now established an active committee and PTA. The teachers are aware that their children need to help their families at harvest time and that the parents themselves need teaching. They feel that the children are eager to learn but have the wrong environment. They are also aware that thoug they all use the government guidelines and follow the curriculum that teaching in the urban areas is more efficient because the people in the towns are more motivated. Here they feel that people are too traditional and stuck in their ways.

The two teachers I interviewed felt that primary school education was important in terms of building a foundation for education and also to make people good citizens. They could not elaborate upon this although there was a good translator to hand who was an ex student and now a present lecturer at a University. They felt that teachers in Bangladesh were seen as second parents and liked the respect they received as teachers. This is especially the case for women who want to be respected in society. They didn't expect the children to ask questions and they themselves couldn't say exactly why they liked teaching though they mentioned the aspect of respect as mentioned above. They did mention how they enjoyed teaching certain subjects more than others. One liked Maths and the other Bangla because of the cultural dimensions.

INTERVIEWS IN THE PUNJAB

INTERVIEW WITH A PROFESSOR of EDUCATION AT CHANDIGAR UNIVERSITY

The Professor at Chandigar University explained to me the basic organisation and also the problems that primary schools face in India and specifically in the Punjab.

State education in India is free and compulsory. The government has legislated that there should be a primary school within every 1-2 Kilometres to ensure availability. These schools are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary School Education (CBSC). However, in the Punjab approximately 50% of schools are private or termed 'public' and are more popular for those who can afford them. These schools have to affiliate with the Directorate of Primary State schools, the CBSC or the Indian certificate for secondary education (ICSB). This should ensure some uniformity or monitoring of the whole primary school system. However, in reality there are big differences and discrepancies between rural and urban, model state schools and other state schools, state schools and public schools, non formal education carried out by NGOs in the villages and the Open School system where a study pack is provided and the study centres are open at much more flexible hours to accommodate the needs of migrants and the itinerant labour classes. There is also a National Council of Educational Research and Training that ensures quality of curriculum, methodology and instruction of strategies for teacher training. However, despite the knowledge of interactive teaching and more progressive methods in practice the text book and rote method is most common. This may be due to the exam system or because past training methods still dominate practice. It may be also because of limited resources as outlined further on.

Despite this complex and comprehensive system in practice there is a 100% enrolment rate and a drop out level by level 5 (the last year of primary school) of 40-60%. As well as this 40% of pupils fail, though students are not debarred from further education if they fail.

The model schools have a much higher standard than any of the other government schools. They are also called the Adarsh Vidalaya (ideal school). Here there is quality pedagogic practice which entails more activity orientated lessons and the teacher is allowed much greater freedom of method and content. There is also greater use of technology and free guidance and counselling for special needs. However, only 10% government schools are ideal schools and though I chanced upon one in Chandigar there were none that I heard about in Amritzar.

India as a multi-lingual country aims to include at least three languages in its curriculum; the vernacular or regional language, the national language, which is Hindi and in the sixth class English. The schools are also secular by definition. Religious denominations such as Sikhs expect to learn about their religion through their homes and through Gurdwaras. In general the rural population (in the majority in the Punjab) is more God fearing and the urban population modern and global by comparison. It is also common for parents to access private tuition for their children if they can afford it. Parents tend to be more involved if their children are at private schools and the urban or /and nuclear family groups in general have a strong commitment to PTAs. However, the population who are tribal, living in slums, or even middle level self-employed workers are much less involved. There is a correlation between parental involvement and the parents' own education, and also between socio-economic status and parental involvement. However, over the last thirty years there has been a progressive change so that sometimes even the most backward parents want more advanced education for their children. This Professor of Education suggests this is because nowadays people are less bound by their beliefs.

Despite unemployment parents have a general aspiration that their children will reach at least graduation level, which is equivalent to senior secondary school level.

In general discipline is not a problem, neither are drugs and alcohol. Children are expected to be silent in class yet there are moves towards a more participatory and creative form of pedagogic practice.

The perception of those who emigrate to the USA, Canada or the UK is that they face their girls becoming too liberated and unable to be suitable for marriage. The Professor said that those young women in America that she has heard about can get too involved with young men and end up with unwanted pregnancies. Therefore the natives of the Punjab would prefer their daughters to return to the Punjab for their education so that they don't get involved in these situations. The boys in the Punjabi communities (even in the west) don't take kindly to these unwanted pregnancies.

The main problem that the educational system faces is the huge disparity in quality education. Some schools have only 2-3 rooms for 5 classes; there is an inadequate infrastructure and some schools don't have libraries, playgrounds or even drinking facilities. Despite the fact that the 1994-1999 (8^{th}-9^{th}) five year plan was focused on primary schools in terms of their budgeting, infrastructure, teacher training and non formal education there is still a long way to go in terms of any unanimity of provision. This is also a reflection of the stratification in the society.

INTERVIEW WITH A PROFESSOR AT AMRITZAR UNIVERSITY

I asked Professor Singh about why he felt the Sikhs were known to be 'enterprising', what equality there really was between the genders and also the ways in which the Guru Gransab (holy book) dealt with contemporary issues. He was interested in the debates about contemporary issues and expressed a confidence and deep knowledge about the basic precepts of Sikhism. He also gave me an overview of the social background of the Sikhs which relates to why they have an egalitarian ideology.

Professor Singh understood that it is not just the Sikhs that are enterprising but Punjabis in general including Hindus and Moslem. His understanding reinforces the egalitarian attitude to differences, which is also part of Sikhism. However, in relation to why Sikhs may be enterprising he drew upon their religious and historical background. He mentioned how the Guru Nanak said that Sikhs are to live in society, to work for the community and how he emphasised labour and love, and that, their aim was to live in the society and not escape from social reality and that there should be a synthesis of the temporal and spiritual. On a historical level the Sikhs had to fight for their land and religion. The Punjab itself is composed of a variety of traditions. There has been an accumulation of cultural interaction and it is also the land of the Sikh saints. Sikhism appealed to artisans, farmers, agriculturalists and in the main to the lower strata of society. These people had to fight for equal rights and developed a liberalism and non-sectarian approach. They developed the collectivist institutions of the Sangat (religious place of worship) and pangat (assembly for common food). In the Sangat there is an expecation of religious discourse but not in the modern debating sense. However, since the nineteenth century the Sangat was provided the platform for debating issues. There is also the tradition of the Scuta, which involves one person going through the legends and making comments.

The Sikhs who emigrated in the early twentieth century were generally illiterate and held very traditional beliefs and values. After the partition Sikh professionals

migrated from the Punjab, however, even today most that leave are relatively unqualified and suffer a cultural crisis when with weak convictions (due to their lack of education) they face more literate people who question their own traditions. Professor Singh suggested that the Sikhs abroad who still dream about Sikhism as proud of its military identity are examples of these unsophisticated and ignorant people.

Historically and religiously there is a popular image of equality of the genders within Sikhism. However, men have created this image and there are few Sikh spokeswomen. As the Sikhs were part of an egalitarian movement and as reformists they set out to address the equality of women through education and also to argue against female infanticide. However, on two levels female equality was fundamentally not addressed. In the first place although the Sikh scriptures did not discriminate between the genders the customary laws and practices in the family and wider society still placed women in a subordinate position. Second, in the 1920s although a newspaper was launched specifically for women it had only one page dedicated to gender equality and still didn't address the fact that within the Sikh religion the husband is treated like a God (prameshver). Also although there was an interest in educating women, women who were illiterate were still expected to put education aside in favour of their household responsibilities and essentially educated women were seen to be educated to support their husband and community in day to day existence. None of the reformers voiced an interest in women being educated to gain a better job, her obligation to her family was her main duty. Under the left wing ideology of Bolshevism that developed in the 1920s and 30s the first monthly periodical called 'phulwari" and another called 'pritam' called for women's rights. However, these rights were still not obligatory and also unless a woman was economically independent they meant little. Furthermore, all these ideas or propositions were still voiced by men and didn't involve any self determination of women. There was still a real fear of western ways by both female and male Sikhs. However, Professor Singh sees a very gradual change, there are more female students these days.

Professor Singh questions the concept of 'identity crisis' that some Sikh intellectuals talk of. He feels that as the Sikhs in the Punjab are a majority (even if they only represent 2% of the population elsewhere in India) their traditions and cultural values are still strong in this area. He also understands that though there is a Hindu taba or Hindu majority in government the political situation in the Punjab is still in favour of the Sikhs. He also argues that there are interesting dialogues and research that question and appraise the situation for Sikhs at home and abroad. There is an international and ideological correspondence among Sikh academics. He cited a few names and articles. However, he understands that the majority of Sikh scholars work within the traditional framework of studies and are defensive about western criticism of Sikhism. He cited the perspective of Mcleod. However, Professor Singh considers Mcleod's criticisms as useful and not threatening. " We the teachers have to confront the scholars on an intellectual plane though tradition may be helpful in the long run". Nonetheless he is aware that there is a limited intellectual commitment to the debates because the brightest Sikh students generally opt to study the sciences rather than the humanities or social sciences. Thus the latter subjects are marginalised.

He considers that the two main enduring aspects of Sikhism will ultimately be the philosophy as stated in the Adi Granth or Guru Grandsab and belief that there is no intermediary between god and human beings. Although the institution of Guruship is crucial to Sikhism the Gurus are always recognised to be guides and not reincarnations or representatives of God. He understands that the religious

seminaries Or 'Deras' of 'Santas' and 'Babas' respond to the political issues of the times and interpret the Guru Grandsab and he says that the Babas and Santas ' are fond of going abroad'. Although they don't write any thing down they do get advice form the intellectuals and Sikh scholars and their sessions are recorded on tape.

INTERVIEW WITH A DR SINGH IN CHANDIGAR

Dr Singh was head of the Punjabi historical studies at Patiala university in the Punjab and is known for his contributions to Sikh history. He has been a member of research projects in Amritsar, Delhi, Calcutta and London. He is now in his late seventies and greatly respected for his commitment to Sikh values and beliefs. I asked him what he felt were the most important tenets of Sikhism for him. What makes the difference between different generations and those living abroad.What the Sikh faith has given him in his life.

Dr Singh believes that the most important aspect of Sikhism is its tolerance of other religions and its understanding that there are many different ways to reach God. He feels this reflects its openness, sense of freedom, adventure and is also why Sikhs can be so enterprising. The Sikh religion has fewer taboos than other religions. It understands that a person should be basically honest and sincere in their belief. It also understands that all men and women are equal. All are the sons of God and therefore they should works and talk together. The Lungas in the Gurdwaras are places for everyone to meet, eat and mix; everyone is welcome there. The Sikh religion is not individualist; it is not about going to the Gurdwaras just to get a blessing but also to mix, to have social intercourse, to gather in a congregation and share responsibilities.

In different countries Sikhs can be more influenced by the context they live in and adopt some of the customs and beliefs of the place they live in. This means that some Sikhs are very orthodox and others choose to change their ways and ignore the fact that their new ways are not sanctioned. For example some Sikhs cut their hair and others have idols around (pictures of the Gurus). Neither of these things are sanctioned yet Sikhs do them. Some older and some younger generation are more fanatical then others; it is not necessarily a difference between the generations. People follow religion on different planes: some follow the laws of their society more rigidly than they do their religion. The way people socialise in the west can create problems because Sikhs don't want their girls to marry men from a different religion.

The Sikh faith has taught Dr Singh to serve others as much as possible because this is something that the Gurus respect, to be helpful, not to hate others but to love others and to respect other religions. Dr Singh has spent his whole life trying to follow these ideals and he says it is up to others to judge whether he has been successful. He also believes that it is vital for people to pray and that there would be fewer ills in the world if people prayed more. He is open to different ways in which people can pray; it is a way of concentrating like meditation.

INTERVIEW WITH THE ADMINISTRATOR AND A TEACHER AT A PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL IN AMRITZAR

The administrator gave me general information about the school and the teacher provided her personal experience and opinions on teaching at the school.

The administrator
The school has an average of 30-40 pupils per class. The school covers the Punjabi medium, the Hindi medium and also the English medium. By the age of ten the

children will have had an opportunity to study all these languages. The children have tests every quarter and exams annually. There is some creative writing and painting in the curriculum. The school encourages parental involvement but because the parents aren't graduates they have to get assistance from other people to help their children with their academic work. The parents do come to PTAs though. The government has little control over the school because although it dictates the curriculum it doesn't provide any financial aid and therefore the inspectors seldom come to visit. They sometimes come when the exams are on and to check on the curriculum. By contrast to the Professor at Chandigar, the administrator believes there are more government schools than public because the government ensures there is a school every 4 kilometres (rather than every 2 as the professor thought). The government schools are badly equipped compared to the public schools because they spend 90% of their funding on the salaries of the teachers and only 10% on the students. In this public school there are growing facilities such as a new library.

The administrator was a bit frustrated by the growing amount of television that children watch because it can interfere with homework times. He also felt that there are too many different holidays for different celebrations such as a guru's birthday. He would like to see more fixed dates for holidays.

The administrator described the Punjab as a very dynamic and prosperous state. He said that it was far ahead with its curriculum and was as advanced as it is in Kerala (this state is nationally if not internationally famous for its literacy levels and educational system).

THE TEACHER

The teacher said that she aimed to get her children through the syllabus and to give them good values,; a good standard in their academic education and also an idea about how to be a good citizen, to gather things that will stay with them for their life. (She found difficulty elaborating upon what good citizenship might entail). She said that the parents expect the teacher to deal with everything and implied that she would prefer them to be more involved. However, she understands that the children's religious education is the parents' responsibility and not hers. However, she does expect the children to be very well behaved.

The problem she faces is a low salary which means that she has to give private lessons as well. However, she said that she loved teaching and preferred teaching at this school rather than in a government school because although teachers get paid more in a government school they face problems she would rather not face. In the government school they have far fewer facilities and the parents are even less involved and the children are also less able. This school is popular with parents because of its facilities and appearance, however she still wished the parents were more involved.

INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER IN A GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL IN AMRITZAR

Everyday the pupils cover all the subjects in the curriculum (Punjabi, Maths, Science and Social studies and in the last class Hindi as well) and only recently, this last year of the primary school have started to learn English as well because the education minister made this decision last year. The children are expected to be obedient and to do some homework. Th children take tests quarterly and exams annually. There are as many as 600 pupils to 19 teachers. This situation is particularly problematic in December when teachers (who are due twenty days holiday a year save up these

days and 50% decide to take holidays in this month (as on the day I visited). The day I visited there was only one third of the staff there, eleven, to the same amount of children. Another disruptive thing is that the classrooms are too dark and cold in the winter (there is no electricity in any of them and often no window but just a doorway) so the lessons have to take place outside in the playground. This school has no facilities, no libraries or grounds even some of the buildings are so inadequate that some lessons have to take place under the shade of a tree.

Parents do not get involved with their children's education, only 10% turn up to a PTA. The teacher is well aware that parents of children at the public schools take more interest in their children's education. However, this school is still better then one in the rural areas because there teachers don't care about their teaching unless the District Officer is about to visit.

She likes to teach because it gives her more time to work at home and decent holidays and this is not the case for other occupations. She receives a decent salary but the lack of facilities is a serious problem, she says that the government doesn't care about facilities.

She would like her children to become doctors or seniors (I assumed she meant people with good jobs – but I didn't have the opportunity to ask) and to be good citizens. She understands that a good citizen is someone who has a moral character, who helps the poor, respects the constitution and also respects Elders and little children.

The school selects children to be monitors, every class has a monitor and there is one who is the monitor for the whole school. These monitors can be of either gender and are chosen for reasons such as being active participants in the class, having good handwriting, the best qualities of a pupil and the ability to control the class and to teach the children. They supervise the class when a teacher is absent and help at morning assemblies and in the winter take singing with the younger children.

OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS (FROM FIELDNOTES)

My expectations

I did not arrive in Bangladesh or India with a blank page. I had various expectations and ideas before I arrived. I had been told about the hospitality of Bangladeshi culture and had read and thought about the difference of a family focused/ religious society. However, I could never have anticipated how powerfully different human contact could be because of different moral and emotional codes. I could never have anticipated that there was so much order in the family and so much disorder in the wider society. I began to see western society in a different light and gained more of an insight into the reasons why the western culture was not always attractive to people who have been born and lived in the east. As one gatekeeper suggested to me, the west has all the security and physical comfort and the east the chaos and unpredictability. Nonetheless the east appears to have a tangible intimacy that is not so accessible in the west where people can exist so independently of each other.

Ethical issues

It was crucial for me to be sensitive to the context in which I was living. Most of the people I met expressed a real trust and generosity towards me. However, their trust and openness would have been easy to abuse. There were times when I felt moved to tears after I had engaged with certain people because they seemed to have retained these qualities and by contrast people living in the UK express greater caution and suspicion towards each other.

For most of the time I struggled with my own ethical codes about servants. Most families who could afford servants had them. However, it was my problem because often the servants appeared to belong to the family and felt secure financially because of their work. Nonetheless there were occasions when I found that the attitudes towards servants were unselfconsciously inequitable. Still it seemed inappropriate for me as an outsider to come in and start criticising a part of their lives that in fact I knew little about.

Belief

Belief was tangible in the way people appeared to deal with life. Despite an arduous and materially impoverished existence compared to that in the UK, people seemed hopeful and emotionally relaxed in their behaviour. By contrast some people living in the UK may express greater caution and suspicion towards each other. It appeared that people's strength came from their belief in God and commitment to their families. Faith in life rather than material resources seemed more prominent.

Every house the researcher stayed in whether, it was Sikh, Muslim, Hindu or even modern with a small 'r' for religion, had either a shrine in a room or a whole room as a shrine, or times in the day for worship. In the houses that were Muslim, and where there was no shrine, as often as five times a day a small mat would be unrolled and women however old would prostrate themselves and pray in the direction of Mecca. In Bangladesh when Azan [call to prayer] occurred people would either be silent and listen or sometimes be praying themselves anyway. In the Punjab Sikh hymns reverberated around and other religious occasions dominated timetables. One schoolteacher complained that so many festivals interrupted children's capacity to keep a regular timetable; they were often days off to celebrate the day of some guru. Religious rituals are more common than not on the Subcontinent. To western, secular eyes there were interesting paradoxes about these rituals. On the one hand they appeared to provide an order to the day and "space" or quiet time for reflection or meditation that did not have to be justified or legitimised: it was expected. On the other hand sometimes what happened or why it happened could seem ludicrous or absurd because to a non-religious person it seemed to belong to some ill founded

superstition. On one occasion a medical doctor ceremoniously threw a coconut in a plastic bag into a river to join several others. This he said was to save the children or something of that order. As a consequence rivers were strewn with plastic bags that would never disintegrate and gradually looked more and more disgusting. Perhaps the origins for this ritual was that plastic bags were considered to be very special when they first arrived in India because they are so useful. The reasoning was not clarified for the researcher. The ordered behaviour correlated with the acceptance of order and a lack of questioning or desire to change. It is also possible to consider that belief in God or superior beings can intensify a belief in patriotism or nationalism and inhibit certain types of scepticism. However, it would be dangerous to underestimate the positive spiritual strength that can provide sustenance and security for people. The banality of certain beliefs or superstitions seemed to be balanced by the sublime strength of spiritual insights and wisdom.

Conduct, dress and routines

Taking a Biman plane to Bangladesh alerted me to my appearance as an outsider. All the female passengers flying to Dhaka wore Shalwar Kameez and from the moment I landed in Dhaka to the time I left I wore these clothes too. In Delhi and Chandigar I had the option to wear western clothes and blend into the scenery but seldom felt inclined. I had never worn Shalwar Kameez before and yet felt very comfortable in them on the subcontinent. This comfort in part was due to other people's enthusiasm. It meant that I could blend in better and indicated my enthusiasm for their customs. Furthermore, when I did consider wearing jeans or tops I felt self conscious about not looking particularly modest and also noticed how exposed some westerners could look in their clothes. Other customs such as eating with your hands and not having western facilities in the bathrooms were luckily things I had acquainted myself with on my visit twenty years ago and had no trouble adjusting to. However, the fact that I was able to, was a great relief to the families I stayed with and made it easier for them to fit me into their crowded living spaces. They treated me with great respect and hospitality and it seemed important for me to respect them by adopting as many as their customs as possible. However, no one insisted on any of these though I was expected to eat all the delicious food I was offered which could be more than I was able to sometimes.

Family routines

The families I stayed with in both Bangladesh and India lived a very routine life. I recorded the morning procedures in the Punjabi I house lived in. The family were Hindu and had a small shrine tucked away behind a cupboard in their sitting room where the father of the house usually slept. However, I was given this room while I stayed. This meant that from about six in the morning individual family members would quietly enter the room, open the cupboard, light a joss stick and candle and pray at the altar for approximately twenty minutes. Simultaneously, at about five am the main pump was turned on and members of the family took it in turn to go and wash. After this the older mother of the house would do the washing up from the night before and the young mother in the house, the daughter in law, would cook breakfast for each member of the family, serving herself last. The men would go off to work, one was a local doctor with his own surgery and the older man had a painting and decorating business. (The standard of living achieved from these incomes was quite meagre and basically paid for food, clothes, rent and a few other necessities in life). The young unmarried daughter who was also my guide managed to get some work as a teacher while I was there she then left for long hours in the day to help the family financially. Once these members had left, the corridor was free of scooters and the women who were left behind went about hand washing all the clothes at the entrance of the house where there was a sink and several plastic basins. Later they prepared food for lunch. Intermittently, they made cups of 'chai' for

basins. Later they prepared food for lunch. Intermittently, they made cups of 'chai' for me once they discovered how much I liked it. However, they insisted on washing all my clothes and making all the food themselves.

Problems

Although I was able to observe and participate in family life, this was not the case for my experience in the schools I visited. Although teachers would probably have allowed me to sit in for two reasons I didn't choose to. First, my lack of understanding of the language would have made the experience relatively frustrating for me and second, I didn't have the time and it seemed more useful to interview teachers to gather an overview. By contrast it seemed inappropriate to interview families about their way of life rather than to live with them. This means that the sources of data vary considerably.

I had problems understanding the different languages. However in the families I stayed with there was always at least one member of the family who was fluent in English and the others were often eager to try to speak some. Some of the teachers I interviewed in the schools didn't speak English or were too shy to try despite an obvious desire to try and assist me. On these occasions I was dependent upon a translator. When I was out on my own in the streets (which happened very seldom), I felt greatly inhibited by my lack of knowledge of the language.

There were odd moments when I first arrived that I suffered from a feeling of claustrophobia because I was always sharing space with members of the family (though I always had my own bed at night). People were always asking questions, trying out their English or arranging occasions for me to be included in. An extreme example of this was when I asked to go and paint by a river in a village near their relation's home. I had envisaged this would be an opportunity to be alone. This occasion was organised so that a member of the family took me out to this place; let me find the right position and then seated himself higher up the bank to ensure that I remained protected. He also took time off work to arrange this. The painting took about two hours to complete, and by the end of this time about twenty villagers were gathered around him at the top of the bank watching me at a careful distance. On other occasions I was escorted to various places with as many as three young male guides or interested members of the family. The claustrophobia didn't last long because there was such an open, easy atmosphere and people seemed so easy chatting and sharing small spaces that it began to feel quite natural and reassuring. In fact I experienced greater problems when I was on my own in a hotel in Chandigar as the only female guest, and used to the warmth and communication of families. Nothing unpleasant happened and there was in fact nothing to fear but I realised that being a lone female in India is a relatively unusual and not appealing experience. It was on this occasion as well as another in Amritzar that I began to feel a bit of a freak. I felt unvoiced questions about where my family or husband might be expressed through people's glances.

Ritualised and ordered lives

The women in the families the researcher lived in were generous and easy to get on with however, the young women often expressed a fear of getting married and tended to try and make a case for their education as a priority in preference to getting married. Nonetheless those young women who were married were eager to look through their thick collection of wedding photos that demonstrated great expense as well as time and preparation for the event.

The married women the researcher met expressed a pride and respect towards their husbands though they often appeared to have closer or more intimate connections

with the women whom they had known or knew now in their lives. Their marriage photos were difficult for the researcher to identify with because in the cases when they had never met their husbands before, there was a conspicuous strain and tension in their expressions. Some were to move across the world and seldom see their close relations again. However, there was little expectation of our concept of "romantic love" and those who had some idea of it tended to have little respect for it. There were also many changes in the large cities. Often in the city a young woman's family would allow her to get to know the future husband and also to reject partners she did not like the look of or whom they as parents were unsure about. In some families women were allowed to marry men of a different caste or religion whom they had already established a relationship with. However, this situation was uncommon and tended to create tensions among the various extended family members. It is inaccurate to look at these marriages out of context.

The context makes their existence more intelligible. The arranged marriage is part of an arranged, very structured and ordered family situation and process. Autonomous behaviour demands a certain courage that we in the west do not have to consider because it is more expected and usual. Also, the west is better equipped to allow individuals to exist autonomously; there is more economic independence. Furthermore, the option to select how and where you will conduct marriage ceremonies as is expected within western, secularism culture would appear offensive. In the west people perhaps believe that they are predominately individuals and not so much members of a family or religious faith unless they have personally decided to become so. Rituals like shopping and watching television do not suggest boundaries or the times in the way that rituals or customs in another culture may do.

This experience suggested to me that the Bangladeshi children who pay visits to their relatives in Bangladesh will be familiar with quite a different set of very ordered beliefs and practices. This sense of order and " rules" may also indicate that the rules that they experience at school are to some extent expected and are likely to exist in their own UK home life.